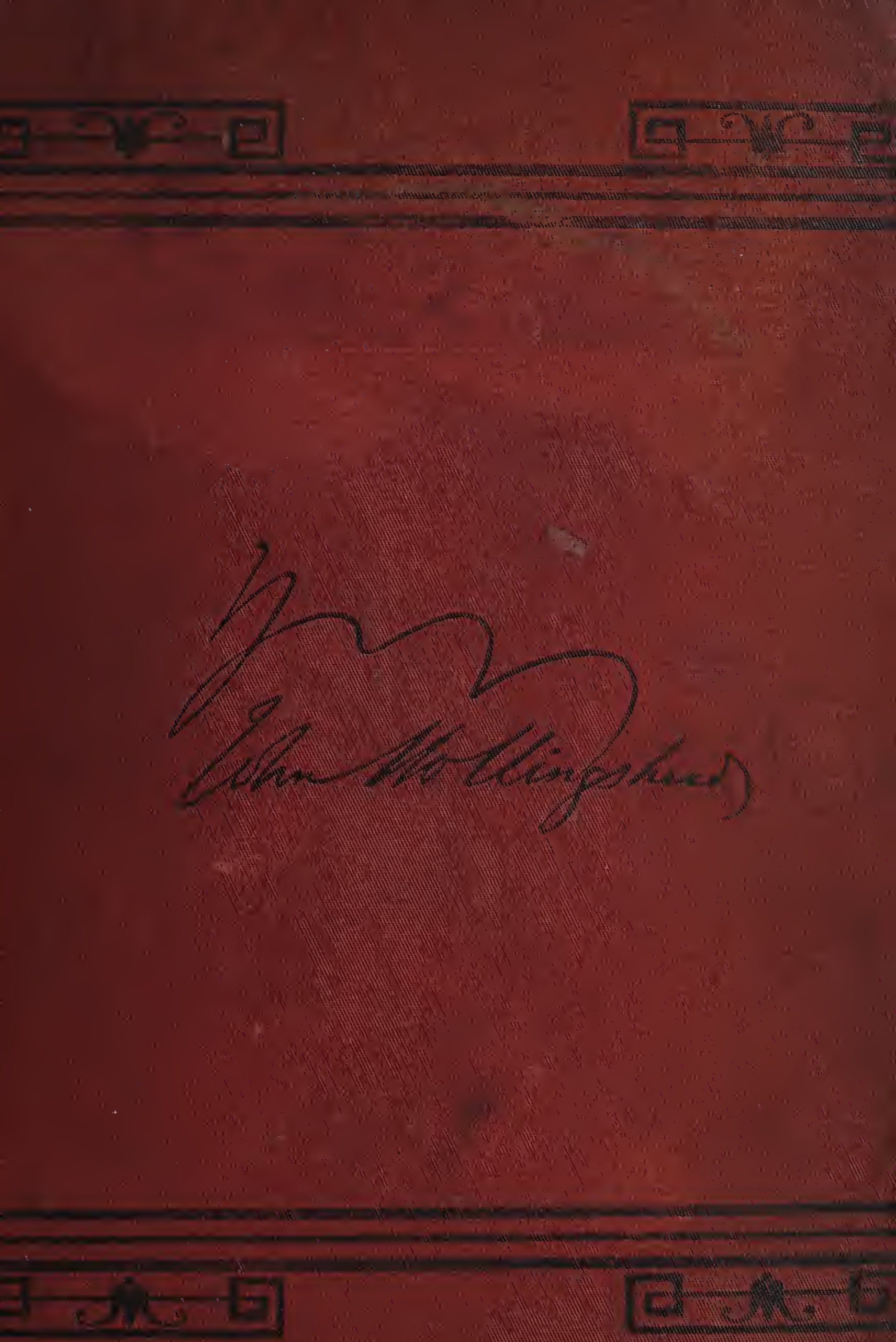

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MISCELLANIES

STORIES AND ESSAYS

VOL. III

MISCELLANIES

STORIES AND ESSAYS

BY

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III

LONDON:

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8, CATHERINE ST., STRAND.

1874.

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RE-CHRISTENED.

THE great family of the Browns, and Joneses, though they never seem to be aware of it, have very much to be thankful for. The bare simplicity—I will not call it vulgarity—of their names may not place them very high in the social scale, but it lands them on a level far above that allotted to scores of their fellow-creatures. They may be despised by the aristocratic Montmorencies and De Grenvilles, they may be pitied by the more homely Barclays and Harrisons, but they can relieve their overcharged feelings by despising and pitying their inferiors. They may laugh at Cockles (Antibilious, not Horatius), they may affect to be disgusted with Giblets, and they may patronize Pighead or Rawbone. They can ease their wounded vanity in a dozen other ways by tormenting a hundred other unfortunate victims of absurd surnames. I know they can do this, because I am one of these victims.

My name is Rottengoose. I got this name fairly from my paternal grandfather, but where he got it from I have never been curious enough to discover. It is one of those names that an owner is not likely to make much stir about. I have never had the courage to follow it into a drawing-room, nor even to hear it announced by a parlour-maid. I slink about with it like a branded criminal. I shudder when I see it in print, or anything approaching to it; and am only induced to break silence now to publish a short and important narrative.

A few months ago, a gentleman appeared as the correspondent of a leading journal, and gave a list of absurd and repulsive surnames,

which he said a friend of his had extracted from the wills in Doctors' Commons. The names, I have too good reason to know, were not invented for the occasion, though I question the story of their discovery. The melancholy catalogue was, I believe, neither more nor less than the list of members of a club, started in self-defence by a few victims of hereditary nicknames. Its founders were two gentlemen named Honeybum and Mudd, who had been blackballed six times at six ordinary clubs, entirely on the score of their titles. This club, which is now broken up, was known as the Refuge, and it drew into its peaceful fold all those wanderers about London who had been compelled to pass half their time in dull chambers and tavern coffee-rooms. The Refuge was not remarkable for architectural embellishment, its charm was found rather in a certain unobtrusive plainness, which suited the character of its supporters. It gave each member a certain amount of society, without the formality and annoyance of introductions; in fact, introductions, though not absolutely forbidden by the bye-laws of the club, were silently, but strongly, discountenanced. No member was held to be properly qualified to enter the club, unless his name was more or less absurd and repulsive, but once admitted, he was never addressed by his title under penalty of a fine. The servants were selected on the same principle as the members; they were never allowed to address the members by their names; and all letters, when brought in on trays, were carried with their faces downwards. Our community, except in these last particulars, was very like the House of Commons; we were each and all known as 'honourable members,' and were never 'named' on any consideration.

The Refuge, like all clubs, was not free from cliques or parties, and from individuals who affected to be superior to their companions. There was the Bungler clique, the Sponge clique, and the Booby clique, the latter comprising nearly all the aristocrats of our society. We had several members who were sulky and solitary in their habits, who neither joined any of the cliques, nor conversed with their fellow-members. We had a butt, a glutton, a bore, a professed wit, a teller of coarse anecdotes, a member who made a counting-house of the place, transacting all his business there, and another member who used it as a bed-room, sleeping there for hours in an easy-chair. We had several notorious grumblers who found fault with everything, and our little society was as much like all other clubs as one pea is like another.

As much happiness as can be found in clubs was found in the

Refuge, and enjoyed for several years without any sensible interruption. Bit by bit, however, the club was being silently undermined by the admission of members who were not properly qualified. Gentlemen bearing, amongst others, such inoffensive titles as Shave, Cuckoo, Dolly, Cake, and Shuffle were admitted by the electing council without consulting the wishes of the majority. Old members, whose names could not be pronounced without a laugh or a shudder, or without being mumbled for the sake of propriety, were thus brought into contact with men more highly favoured by their godfathers and ancestors. I am far from saying that all these new members made the club feel that they belonged to a higher level. Some of them were well-behaved modest gentlemen, and even those who felt most inclined to assert their position, were outdone in presumptuous vulgarity by a few of our most offensively-named members. Still the introduction of this refined alien element was calculated to ruin the club by making it too self-confident. Our society soon clung less to that obscurity which had been its best safeguard, and courted publicity with a blind disregard of consequences. It began by allowing strangers—no matter what their names might be—to dine with members; it ended—I may well say ended—by giving a grand evening party.

The same recklessness which had entertained the idea of turning the Refuge into an Assembly Room, also presided over all the arrangements of this party. Invitations were issued to the female relatives and friends of members, doubtless in imitation of a very bad precedent established by the leading clubs on the day the Princess of Wales arrived in England. The regular servants of the club, with names and habits that were agreeable to the old members, were placed under a new body of men engaged and regulated by the 'purveyor' who furnished the refreshments. None of the conventional ceremonies of assemblies were consequently dispensed with, and the company, instead of being silently ushered into the drawing-rooms, were announced by a gigantic footman with the lungs of a Stentor. His memory was very retentive, his feelings were very blunt, and his pronunciation was terribly clear, the result being that not one name—presentable or unpresentable—was lost upon the company.

Mr Asse, Dr Bub, Mr Belly, Mr and Miss Boots, and Alderman Cripple, were amongst the first arrivals.

They were quickly followed by Messrs Fat, Ginger, Drinkmilke, Beaste, Dunce, and Buggey. Mr Honeybum, one of the founders of

the club, but who now had little voice in its management, got in unobserved and unannounced, like me, at a side door amongst a crowd of waiters. Several other members were clever enough to imitate this trick, amongst whom were Messrs Screech, Spittle, Cheese, and Kidney.

The announcing footman was not idle, and his voice was heard above the hum of conversation:—

'Mr and Miss Milksop, and the two Miss Pigges.'

'Mr Vittles; Mr Kneebone; Mr Jugs.'

'Dr Poopy; Mr and Mrs Gotobed; the Reverend Mr Shrimps.'

'Mr, Mrs, and the two Miss Jellies; Mr Leaky; Mr Rumpe; Mr and Mrs Taylecoate.'

'Dr Cauliflower and Miss Sprat; Mr Demon; Mr Cod; Mr Funck; Mr Mug; Mr and Mrs Radish.'

'What funny people; it's like a play,' said the youngest Miss Pigge, loudly; a young lady who ought not to have been brought so early into society.

'Hush,' returned Miss Milksop, an elderly unmarried lady, who had charge of this young person and her sister, 'let us seek for some refreshment.'

The announcements still continued:—

'Mr Lambshead; Mr and Mrs Looby; Mr Bonfire; Mr and Miss Sawney; Mr Butter; Dr Whiteleggs; the Reverend Mr Stump; Mr Licie; Mr Gullet; Mr Meatyard; Mr Smelt.'

''Pon my word,' said Mr Kneebone, at this point, addressing Dr Poopy, 'they ought to make a gathering like this a little more select. That last batch of names is enough to make a fellow sick.'

'My dear sir,' returned Dr Poopy, 'the same feeling came over me; but you know there are many people who *must* be invited on these occasions.'

I moved away from this group and drew near another, by which time Messrs Clodd, Cheek, Bones, Humpe, Prigge, Cockey, Sprawl, Swine, Tick, Fever, Deadhorse, and Hardup, with several ladies, had been announced, and had mingled with the crowd.

'My dear fellow, there's Deadhorse just come in,' said Mr Mug to Mr Buggey; 'let me introduce him to you.'

'I'm not equal to it to-night,' replied Mr Buggey, affectedly; 'I've not been very well lately, and the name calls up unpleasant associations.'

The visitors still kept pouring in, announced by the stentorian footman:—

'Mr and Mrs Pricktoe; Mr Spratt; Dr Mountebank; Mr Corpse; Mr and Miss Hussey; Mr Scragge; Mr Phisicke; Mr and Mrs Muddell; Mr Flashman; Mr Gaby; Mr and Mrs Swette; Mr Lazy; Mr Monkey; Mr Mule; Mr and Miss Poker; Mr Squash; Mr Pott; Mr and Mrs and the two Miss Headaches; Dr Gready; the Reverend Mr Sheartlifte; Mr Idle; Mr and Miss Maypole; Mr Skim; Mr and Mrs Gull; Mr Simpleton; Mr Rascal; Mr Barehead; Mr and Mrs Dam; Mr Shoe; Mr and Miss Vile; Mr Bulley; and Mr and Miss Shirt.'

'I say, Rottengoose, my boy,' shouted Mr Sawney, who fancied himself a bit of a wag, 'there's something wrong with the gender of that last name, isn't there?'

'I don't quite comprehend you,' I replied, rather nervously, for the way in which he shouted my hated name was very embarrassing.

'Don't you see,' he returned loudly, 'Mr and Miss Shirt—Mr Shirt is all right, but Miss Shirt ought to be Miss Shift; eh, Rottengoose, eh?'

'Ha, ha,' I responded, very feebly, 'glad to hear from you again.'

The shouting of my name attracted the attention of Mr, Mrs, and the two Miss Jellies, whom I had bashfully avoided, though I often visited them in private. To put me at my ease in their society, they had kindly softened my name to 'Writingcase,' or something that sounded very much like it, and by this title they always addressed me.

'We never heard you announced, Mr Writingcase,' exclaimed Mrs Jelly, in which remark she was echoed by her husband and daughters.

'No,' I said, nervously, fearing that Mr Sawney would rally me upon the way in which my title had been softened; 'I was here—that is in the building—before the doors were opened.'

At this moment I saw the dreaded Sawney coming towards me with his mouth wide open. Much against my inclination, I tore myself from the Jelly party, and hurried away with my tormentor. He had invented a wretched conundrum turning upon their names, and though I felt that I could have knocked him down, I was compelled to listen to him.

I will not dwell any longer on the events of that party. The club, as I fully expected, withered gradually after that night; as the members had been coarsely aroused to a sense of their degradation.

A hundred applications in one form or another were made, to the legal authorities, for a change of name within a week of the meeting, and there was a great run upon classical and aristocratic titles. My Christian name being Julius, I selected Cæsar to follow, and this advertisement appeared in the daily journals :—

THIS IS TO GIVE NOTICE, that I, the undersigned JULIUS ROTTENGOOSE CÆSAR, lately called Julius Rottengoose, now and for some time past residing in Pall Mall, and the Marshes near Stratford, Essex, gentleman, have determined to assume and take from the 10th day of November, 1863, and thenceforth and at all times hereafter to USE the SURNAME of CÆSAR, in addition to the surname of Rottengoose, but as my last and principal surname, and by a Deed Poll under my hand and seal, bearing date the 10th day of November, 1863, and duly enrolled in her Majesty's High Court of Chancery, I have, in order to give effect to such determination, and for the purpose of evidencing the same, declared, and I do hereby declare, that I shall at all times hereafter, in all deeds, writings, documents, letters, and other instruments of writing, and in all dealings, transactions, and in all intercourse with other persons, and on all occasions whatsoever, set, subscribe, and use the surname of Cæsar in addition to the said surname of Rottengoose, and as my last and principal surname, and by the said deed, I have expressly authorized and desired, and I do hereby expressly authorize and desire, all and every person and persons whomsoever to designate, and describe, address and call me at all times and on all occasions whatsoever by such surname of Cæsar accordingly.

Dated this 12th day of November, 1863.

JULIUS ROTTENGOOSE CÆSAR.

Witness, G. A. Scragg, Solicitor,
Bow-legged-lane, Waddling-street, E. C.

I need scarcely add that though I retain the name of Rottengoose for legal reasons, I shall use it even more sparingly than is indicated in the above deed. Whatever windfalls of property—expected and unexpected—may fall to the share of J. Rottengoose C., will be immediately seized and enjoyed by J. R. Cæsar. My change of name is likely to lead to another, before long, when Miss Jelly will probably become Mrs J. R. Cæsar. We shall probably go abroad for a lengthened period to avoid the detestable Sawney, who is still satisfied with his repulsive title.*

* All the names used in this paper are veritable titles.

PASSING THE TIME.

EVERY man who in the course of his business existence has had the misfortune to be compelled to seek an interview with Mr Proviso, the eminent City lawyer, can tell a painful story of monotonous hours passed in the outer office of the great master of the law, awaiting the coveted favour of an interview. Mr Proviso's business appears to lie amongst a class of people who are doubtless very influential and highly respectable, but who seem either to have no proper sense of the value of time, or who hoard up their legal grievances—their actions and their defences—until they assume such gigantic proportions, that half a day passed with their professional adviser is scarcely sufficient to clear off the accumulation. It may be that in the rank and file of clients who hang upon the wisdom and experience of Mr Proviso, I hold a position rather below the general level, and am, therefore, treated to those broken scraps of time which can be spared from the banquet of more favoured, because more important, individuals. One thing is certain, that go on what day and what hour of that day I will, I am met with the eternal answer from the eternal clerks: 'Will you have the kindness to take a seat, sir, for Mr Proviso is engaged?' When I first heard these now too familiar sounds, I was weak enough to inquire how long the engagement was likely to last, and was always met with the reply, intended to be comforting: That a few minutes would certainly be sufficient to finish the business on hand. Sitting patiently upon an old office chair, listening to the measured ticking of the office clock; taking a mental inventory of the faded office furniture; reading the not very interesting placards regarding the sales by auction of houses, leases, and lands, and varying this meagre meal of literature with the titles of blue-books, and the calf-bound treatises of the law, the precious moments of the short business day passed from me one by one, and at last I awoke to a sense of the utterly unreliable nature of the information given me by Mr Proviso's clerks concerning their master's professional arrangements. After the first few visits I became reconciled to the existing order of things, and sank mechanically into my accustomed chair, to await the con-

venience and the pleasure of the great professor of the art of making a living out of the quarrels of foolish or wicked people. The distant mellowed hum of carriages in the street, the music of new quills gliding quickly over folio foolscap, the warmth of the office fire, and the general monastic gloom of the place, always produced in me a kind of torpor akin to sleep, in which the imagination was actively engaged in proportion as the body was indulged in idleness and rest.

It was on these occasions that I always found myself looking at the gaping mouths of the conversation tubes, which communicated with Mr Proviso's private room, and the apartments above-stairs; and, by way of passing the time, allowing my fancy to run riot upon all the probable uses and abuses of these ingenious gutta percha mechanical contrivances of modern times.

I saw in imagination young Pyramus, the youthful cashier of Mr Proviso's establishment, when the other clerks were fully employed, whispering his tubical tenderness to his Thisbe—the housekeeper's fair daughter—up through intervening reception-rooms, and dusty receptacles of ancient records of folly, spite, and wrong; past the stern, pompous lawyer sitting amongst his wordy deeds; past the copying-clerks' garret, where old men and boys were writing over and over again the same old story of an ejectment, until 'whereas, and therefore, and inasmuch, and thereof,' burnt into their dizzy brains, and nearly drove them mad; past all these things, until it reached the bower of the listening damsel, who sat with her needlework high above the house-tops, looking across the river at the pleasant Surrey hills. And then came Thisbe's silvery reply so gently down the tube; past the copying-clerks; past the dusty records; past the old lawyer who had left his youth in his law books and his bills of costs; until it found its resting-place in young Pyramus's ear—young Pyramus, who waited with a smiling face, like a child who hears the mermaid's song swelling from the hidden purple depths of an ocean shell. Then the dull office shone full of light, and the yellow parchment became pictured with the forms of fields and waving trees, for Pyramus had learned where Thisbe would walk in the sunset of a summer's evening outside the city walls.

Again, in imagination, the scene changes; and, from the heights of the romantic and the poetical, I sink to the depths of the real and the prosaic. This time the eye of fancy rests upon old Jolly Bacchus in the office, whose face and general appearance give sure indication of a systematic indulgence in the dissipation of drink. I see him wander-

ing into the office long after the regulation hour, with his face and hands only partially washed, his shirt dirty, and his clothes unbrushed, his eyes glazed, and his speech thick, and a general sense of offended dignity, mingled with a determination to be steady, regulating every attitude of his body, every muscle of his face. When he makes his appearance he is received with affected cordiality by his fellow-clerks; and the smiles and winks that are exchanged at his condition are carefully concealed from his jealous observation. He takes his seat at his accustomed desk with some little difficulty; and leaning on his elbows, he regards the smiling faces of the clerks immediately opposite him with a pursed-up mouth and heavy eyes. Such an opportunity for sport, of course, it is not in human nature to throw away; and the jocular clerk (there is always one in every office) commences the fun by a conversation with Jolly Bacchus, calculated to inflame the mind of that individual against his employer, Mr Proviso.

'Mr P., sir, has been inquiring for you half-a-dozen times within the last twenty minutes,' remarks the jocular clerk, winking at the company.

'Wellshir,' returns Mr Jolly Bacchus, 'and whatish—thater to you?'

'Oh, nothing, sir,' replies the jocular clerk, 'nothing to me; but a great deal to our respected governor, Mr Proviso.'

'That, shir, for Mister Provishe—o,' returns Jolly Bacchus, with an attempt to snap his fingers, which produces no sound.

'Oh, come,' replies the jocular clerk, 'while we accept our salaries we must attend to our duties.'

'Shir,' exclaims Jolly Bacchus, now working himself into a state of drunken rage, 'No man shall dictate me. Who's Misher Provishe—o, Ish like to know? I made him what—is—taught him, shir, all's law—and I can pull him down, shir—pull'm down.'

'Well, sir,' replies the jocular clerk, playing upon the weakness of the intoxicated Bacchus, 'you'd better tell him so up the pipe; he's in his room; tell him so up the tube, like a man!'

It is about twelve o'clock in the day, and Mr Proviso is closely closeted with a most important client, an East Indian Director. Mr Proviso is standing behind his writing-table, with his thumbs stuck in the arm-holes of his waistcoat, and his fingers tattooing upon his chest, looking like a prime minister receiving a deputation. The important client, a man of severe aspect and unbending exterior, is seated in the large easy-chair, which stands near the mouth of the

speaking-tube against the fire-place. The two men are trying to find their way out of the middle of a knotty discussion upon an intricate question of law and business, when a gurgling sound is heard to issue from the mouth of the speaking-tube, followed slowly by this address, the original thick pronunciation of which is considerably increased by the peculiar channel of communication:—

'Misher Provishe—o, shir, I'm not—going to be dictate—to by you. You're a hum'ug and an impos'er, shir, an' you know it. I've more law in my lill'e finger, shir, than—you have in——whole body, shir. I'm'——

What further abuse from Jolly Bacchus would have come up the tube no one can tell; for, upon the first sound of the familiar voice, Mr Proviso, keeping his eye steadily fixed upon the startled East Indian Director, sidled with admirable coolness towards the mouth of the unwelcome oracle, and continuing, with some little incoherence in his tone, manner, and ideas, to carry on the important business discussion, as if nothing had interrupted it, he seized the stopper of the pipe, and corked up for ever the intoxicated flow of Jolly Bacchus's eloquence.

Such are some of the phantoms of imagination that I conjure up to fill that dreary pit of mental vacuity, which deepens and deepens, as I waste the precious mid-day hours, waiting wearily for the leisure moments of the great Mr Proviso.

HOW I FELL AMONG MONSTERS.

DURING the time that I was a soap-boiler in Queenhithe, and alderman of my ward in Lower Thames Street, Her Most Gracious Majesty paid a state visit to the City. I was, of course, by virtue of my position in the Corporation, one of the most prominent of the group whose duty it was to receive Her Majesty at the portals of the Guildhall; and I received the honour of knighthood. The empty badge of distinction was thrust upon me without any wish expressed or implied on my part. Consequently, when I was duly created one of the sacred throng, I

walked about for several weeks in a moody, restless, uncomfortable state of mind. If I had been a single man I should most assuredly have declined the honour; but my wife, as I called her then, my lady, as I call her now, with an amiable weakness (which she shares with a multitude of important people), begged that I would on no account miss the opportunity; and I, therefore, submitted without a murmur. She endeavoured to fortify me in my new position by picturing to me the behaviour of certain other noble martyrs, who had exhibited great fortitude and patient endurance under a similar infliction. Some there were, who went steadily on in their old round of portrait-painting, or statue-moulding, and still were knights. Some there were, who gave lessons in music, or performed surgical operations in back parlours, and still were knights. Some there were who were skilful with the builder's rule and trowel, or the chemist's retort and blow-pipe, and still were knights. All this was very cheering, as far as it went; but it did not reconcile me to the absurdity of a real knight sitting in a soap-boiler's counting-house in Queenhithe. I fancied that the very porters in my employment laughed at me when I arrived of a morning; and that my chief clerk looked with pity upon me, and the honours which I wore so uneasily.

I soon made up my mind to a decided course of action, and another week saw my business transferred to a nephew and my chief clerk; my comfortable middle-class family mansion at Peckham advertised for sale, and my domestic circle removed to the neighbourhood most adorned by that aristocracy of whom we were suddenly called upon to form a part.

Having supplied ourselves with all the solid necessaries of our position, my wife (or my lady, I mean), began to look round, to see what there was of the ornamental that we had omitted; and the first thing that came under this class of requirements was a coat of arms. The order was given to a competent person; and, after the usual family inquiries, and a considerable delay, a highly-coloured drawing of our heraldic symbols was forwarded for inspection. I never had much admiration for or knowledge of heraldry, and my expectations of deriving much satisfaction from the investigations and performances of the learned artist engaged, was very small indeed.

I was, however, scarcely prepared for the combination of monstrosities which were presented to me. There was a shield, which looked like a cauldron; on the left side was the drawing of an unwieldy animal, meant for an elephant, leaning with one paw heavily

against the shield, and with the other paw directing attention to its face, like a showman exhibiting the great canvas picture outside a booth at a fair. On the other side was an animal compounded of the turkey, the whale, the flying-dragon, the bantam cock, and the mermaid, with a sting coming out of its jaws, looking like a long tobacco-pipe. These were called supporters: the term 'supporters' pleased me very much as applied to the elephant, who threatened every moment to overbalance the frail structure, burying the other curious monster in the ruins. On the top of the cauldron, called the crest, were the head of a Hottentot Venus, and a lively boar tripping it gently on the light fantastic paw. In the centre of the shield, or cauldron, were two fat, consequential birds, name unknown, and three small-tooth combs; for the artist said he found out (an excuse no doubt for the enormous charge he made) that our family had been ennobled in the dark ages—dark indeed! However, this last heraldic freak, caused me to question the artist about the meaning of such highly fanciful, not to say humorous, hieroglyphics, and I obtained a long account of how I became entitled to each of the supporters, the elephant and the compound animal; the Hottentot Venus and the dancing boar; the two birds and the three small-tooth combs. Notwithstanding the explanation, I had not yet the courage to order the engraving of a seal, before I consulted my lady.

'Well, my dear,' that sensible woman observed, 'it does seem odd that we should get such a peculiar coat of arms; but if you look over a Peerage, you will find many things quite as strange, and I have no doubt the artist is quite right.'

Acting upon the suggestion of my lady, I consulted a Peerage, and also one or two books upon heraldry, and I soon found myself studying a peculiar alphabet, mainly consisting of animals and monsters. There were cockatrices, dragons, mermaids, lions, wiverns, griffins, griffins' heads, beavers, otters, effigies of men, crabs, lobsters, crevices, sole-fish, salmon, dolphins, eels, flies, bees, parrots, doves, pelicans, martlets, cocks, peacocks, ravens, turkeys, owls, phœnixes, hawks, falcons, spread eagles, heads, wings, feathers, legs, cranes, herons, kingfishers, swans, ducks, adders, snails, scorpions, grasshoppers, toads, tortoises, emmets, spiders, moles, hares, conies, greyhounds, dogs, foxes, cats, squirrels, hedgehogs, wolves, wolves' heads, bears, bears' heads, tigers, tigers' heads, lions' heads and paws, unicorns, camels, boars and boars' heads, stags' heads and bucks' heads, bucks, harts, hinds, stags, goats, goats' heads, bulls, whole and

in part; elephants, horses, asses, and death's heads and bones. Then there were angels, spheres and stars, suns and suns' rays, moons, crescents, fires and flames, sea, fountains, rocks, mullets, nebulæ, rainbows, stones, trees, leaves, escarbuncles, escallop shells, and pickaxes.

Amongst the monsters more rarely used were the nepandis or ape-hog — half ape, half swine; the homocane—half child, half spaniel; the hamya—a compound of a woman, a dragon, a lion, a goat, a dog, and a horse; the dragon-tiger and the dragon-wolf; the lion wyvern or flying-serpent; the winged satyr-fish; the cat-fish; the devil-fish; the ass-bittern; the ram-eagle; the falcon-fish with a hound's ear; and the wonderful pig of the ocean.

The application of these ample and curious materials is worthy of the science. The crests present every conceivable form of animal and monster in every attitude of repose, defiance, meekness, stupidity, pomposity, friskiness, rage, and fear. The supporters are sometimes animals and sometimes men, and the former are generally more intellectual in appearance than the latter. Sometimes it is a striding unicorn talking loudly across the cauldron to a frowning lion. Occasionally it is a conversation between an indignant tiger and a mild-eyed, melancholy pelican. Frequently the supporters are two sturdy angels, with fat, solid wings, and short, thick, earthy legs. Sometimes it is a pair of indecent giants with clubs, or a couple of snarling tigers, or a pair of large cats with heads like bank-directors and hind-quarters shaved like poodles. Sometimes a brace of respectable master sweeps do duty at the sides, or a couple of frantic eagles dancing a wild toe-and-heel dance. Then animals of more than doubtful genus point with weak, idiotic smiles to the figures on the shield, which are quite in harmony with the crests and supporters. Moors' heads, ships like sauce-tureens, mallets, bellows, horseshoes, salmon standing up like raw recruits, helpless dancing-bears, dignified owls, waltzing lions, marching blackbirds, pot-bellied doves, acrobatic swine, and a mass of inanimate objects, the pictorial and symbolical meaning of which it is only given to a pursuivant-at-arms to understand. In the crests, besides animals, there are the doll-trick, the army in Bombastes Furioso, the constant arm sticking up like the pigeon-leg out of a pie, heads on the points of daggers, men on rocking-horses, fools'-heads, venerable bearded faces looking over the edge of the shield, like Socrates in a warm bath, and legs kicking out right and left, as if the owner had fallen head-first into the heraldic cauldron.

Looking at the highly refined aristocracy of the nineteenth century,

with their art treasures, their pictures, their music, their statues, their love of harmony and grace in dress and furniture, it is marvellous to find them struggling to trace themselves back to a race of men, who could have been nothing but rude, untaught, brutal savages. Still more marvellous is it to find them clinging to a set of uncouth symbols, that were invented to convey ideas to a generation of chine-splitting, head-cracking ruffians, who could neither read nor write.

In deference to my lady, I have followed in the footsteps of my neighbours. The seal to my letters is as large as a raspberry tart. I have had my arms painted on the panels of my carriage; and, when one of the family dies, I shall hang up, outside the mansion, a black-bordered escutcheon, as large as a public-house sign-board. Sometimes I fancy that I see a practical man looking at the unwieldy elephant, the compound monster, the head of the Hottentot Venus, the lively boar, the consequential birds, and the three small-tooth combs, with something like contempt; and I feel inclined to rush out and shake him by the hand, telling him that I agree with his sentiments exactly.

VESTIGES OF PROTECTION.

AM a stern, unflinching, thorough-going free-trader. Whenever I use a cab, I give a cabman whatever he thinks proper to demand; and when any regulation comes out about omnibus fares, I shall pay no more regard to it than I do to the orders of the Trinity Board. That's my character—firm and consistent.

I like clean boots. I may be stout and puffy as regards figure; but my feet are always neat. Much, however, as I covet clean boots, I will not have them polished by a gaudy little Protestant ruffian, clad in red sackcloth, like a drummer in the Spanish legion, or another gaudy little Catholic ruffian, clad in yellow or blue sackcloth, like a badly-dressed jockey at Newmarket. I hate a Protestant shoeblack as I hate a Protestant champion at a parliamentary election; and I hate a Catholic shoeblack in the same proportion. I do not deal with a Protestant baker, I do not employ a Protestant sweep, I

do not patronize a Protestant butcher, and I will not encourage a Protestant shoeblack. I am not clothed by a Catholic tailor, I am not shaved by a Catholic barber, my dustbin is not emptied by a Catholic dustman, and I will not have my boots cleaned by a Catholic shoeblack.

I will not allow the police to be the sole judges of markets. I will not, without protest, give them the power to determine when any street trade is overstocked, and to say, 'So far shall you go, and no farther.' If there is such a demand for good boot-cleaning, let it be fully supplied, until four stockbrokers are polished off for a penny instead of one. Let the plinth of every column, the base of every statue, the recess of every archway, bristle with unfettered shoeblacks, plying their useful trade in sublime indifference to the periodical passing to and fro of the hateful obstructive officer of the law. Why should I, in a free country—a tax-payer of thirty years' standing—be left in the front of Bow Church, in the broad glare of a summer's day, in the ridiculous position of having one trouser-leg tucked up, and the other not—with one boot polished and the other not ; or, which is equally annoying, with one boot shining like a mirror, and the other presenting a dead, dull surface of wet blacking that has gradually got dry, because I have employed a shoeblack unlabelled as Protestant or Catholic ? Why should I, for the same reason, be subject to the indignity of having a boy with a foot-box, blacking-bottle, and shoe-brushes slung over his shoulders, beckoning me round the corner of a banking-house, as if I was playing touch or hi-bob-ree, or taking a part in some nefarious proceeding ? Why, administrative reformer, should I be condemned to a weary pilgrimage about town, with one boot muddy and the other polished, to find a legally qualified Protestant or Catholic shoeblack to restore the ornamental balance under the protection of the police ? I say again, Why ?

Why am I interrupted in the middle of a purchase of a few ribstone pippins, because my unfortunate fruiterer stands behind an old basket in the street, instead of a massive mahogany counter inside a magnificent plate-glass shop ? Why do I see her flying across the road at the approach of a policeman, scattering her wares in the frightful hurry of the transit ? Why am I ordered into a flashy dépôt, to give sixpence for a peach, paying for all the gorgeous fittings which I do not want, and which I detest, when I can buy the same, if not a better article outside, if the law would only allow me,

for one penny? Why are humble traders to be prevented from supplying me with the exact thing that I want, at the exact time that I want it, and at the lowest possible price, because their capital will not allow them, or their trade does not require them, to stand anywhere else than in the gutter? I ask again, Why?

I hate shams; and I ask why my place of dissipation is sometimes called a Casino, and sometimes a Dancing Academy? I want to know why a thing that is considered to be rotten, utterly bad, and to be exterminated at any cost in the parish of Saint Straitlace the Martyr, can be immediately transplanted, to flourish in the adjoining parish of All Serene? I want to know what earthly good a licensing system is, which merely alters the title of a place from Casino to Dancing Academy, the thing itself remaining the same?

I cannot imagine, for a moment, why any public-house, which has already got full permission to sell any quantity of the fiery, maddening liquors which eat into mind, and body, and soul, should be refused the power of tempering that permission with a little harmless music. I may sit for hours on a tub in front of a glittering bar, drinking the awful poison, in the company of half-palsied juniper idiots, and no one will interfere with me in the name of the law; but if I go into a spacious, well-lighted building, at the rear of the house, and join a large and comparatively well-conducted audience of common people who have learned to drink less, and to seek harmless amusement more, and if the man who is singing on the small stage, and the little orchestra which accompanies him are not licensed pursuant to the twenty-fifth of King George the Second, I stand a chance of spending my night in the comfortless cell of a police-station for taking part in an illegal entertainment.

I want to know what purpose that part of the licensing system serves, which is applied to the regulation of the sale of intoxicating drinks? I am sure of one great fact, that supplied how, when, or where it is, a certain quantity of gin, for example, will be used in this country at a certain price within a certain time. If the licensing system has any effect, it deteriorates the quality of all the gin sold in the given time, without decreasing the quantity directly, or through the operation of an increase in price. Supply and demand will fit into each other in spite of supposed legislative restrictions. The licensing system, by increasing the cost of supply, in this case, has given the consumer turpentine instead of gin, for the consumer will

not have his quantity lessened or his price raised, and the supplier meets the difficulty by adulteration.

If gin was sold to-morrow at every apple-stall, if rum-punch was manufactured and ladled out at street-corners like stewed eels, and if beer was hawked about in cans from house to house, like milk, does any reflecting mind suppose that our workhouses, our prisons, and our lunatic asylums, would be overrun with paupers, thieves, and madmen, more than they are now? When men resort to those very convenient and unmolested dens of vice, whose outward shell of apparent virtue consists of a tea-pot, a French roll, two stale eggs, and the word Coffee written in prominent letters upon the shop-window blind, they find a strange charm in drinking the forbidden fire-water in a tea-cup, long after midnight, purely because they are engaged in something which the law, in its wisdom, has thought proper to prohibit. When the night-cabman goes over to the very early breakfast-stall, and behind the friendly shelter of the bacon, the coffee-cups, and the quartern-loaves, asks the guileless proprietor, with a wink, for a drop of 'physic,' he does so, in many cases, for no other reason than because the 'physic' is a little more difficult to get at than coffee. When once the great intoxicating drink-selling monopoly is broken up, and the trade is not confined to a number of metropolitan licensed palaces, dram-drinking, divested of all its meretricious and alluring adjuncts, is likely to decrease in proportion as it descends to the common-place level of the oyster stall and the baked-potato can.

So much for trade restrictions; now for certain branches of commerce that are more free than welcome.

Why do I find stall-keepers limited, and heterodox shoeblacks forbidden, under the pretext that they interfere with the street traffic, when I cannot walk down any large trading thoroughfare without being compelled to pass under groves of cabbages, groves of carpet brooms, groves of blucher-boots, and groves of legs of mutton? Why should I be edged into the gutter because little Reels, the haberdasher, has once, during a long trading career, received an enormous truss full of some stuff or another from the country, and he likes to keep it on the pathway in front of his shop the whole day long, that his neighbours may see what a gigantic trade he is doing, and that his rival over the way may be driven mad with envy? Why should I be edged into the gutter because old Yoicks, the saddler, or young Strawbottom, the upholsterer, has positively packed up ten wooden

cases, the size of egg-chests, which he places across the pavement for several days, that the public may see they are directed to no less a person than 'His Excellency the Right Honourable Lord Peppercraft, Ramihumbug, East Indies?'

Why am I, in the heat of a summer's day, condemned to walk under long avenues of meat; sirloins of beef, far from fresh, melting loins of mutton, and sheep slung up by their legs, with their bleeding noses and cracked crowns dangling at my feet, because a little knot of butchers have found it profitable and convenient to extend their trade from the narrow limits of their shops, under awnings carried across the pathway, flush with the gutter? Why am I hustled under the unwelcome shade by greasy bullies, who ask me in stentorian tones to buy, intimidating me all the while with knives of fearful aspect?

Why am I brought to a dead stand under a similar awning, because an enterprising greengrocer has blocked up the way with greens and carrots, four or five sacks of coals, and half-a-dozen large baskets of potatoes?

Why am I compelled to wend my weary way under large tin baths and warming-pans, gent's Wellingtons at seven-and-six, firkins of butter, and second-hand perambulators, intermixed with easy-chairs and fenders?

If the policeman is to be left the sole arbiter of the destinies of trade, I do not think he should be allowed to compound for undue leniency to a compact phalanx of encroaching shopkeepers, by excessive severity to a body of weak, poor, disunited, struggling, houseless traders.

If law-making is to be anything but an inflated sham, it will be well for our legislators to see that they do not put down names, but realities.

If we are to guide ourselves by the great principle of free trade, let us carry it into the very smallest nooks and crevices of commerce. There is no reason why we should have a penny fixed arbitrarily as the price for boot-cleaning, when a halfpenny might suffice; and there is certainly no reason why a lad should be subject to an examination in one of the two great schools of theological doctrine, before he is considered worthy to be entrusted with a blacking-bottle.

DEBT.

IF debt had no other attractions to recommend it, it would always be welcome to a certain class of people, because of the importance that it gives a man, and the interest that it causes others to take in his welfare. By debt, of course I do not mean that miserable blot upon our social system—that beggarly degree of involvement which is akin to pauperism—that wretched existence made up of small loans, obtained with difficulty, even when scrupulously refunded—that debt for whose victims the black jaws of a Mammon prison are always gaping with hungry voracity. The debt I speak of is that of the large operator—the merchant prince, whose dainty pampered palate revolts at capital proffered with blind confidence, if it is at a fraction above the market price; whose courage and enterprise give a sublimity even to bankruptcy. The debt I speak of is that of the dweller in marble palaces—the dignified receiver of the unsolicited offerings of usury and trade, the patron of art, of literature, and the drama, the noble scion of a noble house, whose mission it has been to raise insolvency from the dirt and mire of the squalid streets, and place it in a fitting temple where men will fall down and worship it. Oh! thou poor blind reader of the book of human nature—thou abject wretch—thou miserable starveling—thou nervous, timid, hungry applicant for half-a-crown: is that a coat in which to effect a loan? is that a hat to inspire confidence in the breast of a friend or a capitalist? For mercy's sake, go either to the far west, and take a lesson from Tattersall's, the Clubs, Hyde Park, or the grand Opera-house; or direct thy steps Citywards, and watch the frequenters of banks and discount houses, the Stock Exchange, and places where merchants most do congregate, and tell me if thou seest any man as abject in appearance as thou art (even when, in reality, a greater beggar), except a few poor City pensioners, and humble, meek, and plodding clerks, who have worn themselves out in a thankless, hopeless servitude for bankrupt masters. Hast thou no friend among all the thriving throng, who instead of stopping this pressing need with a few fleeting shil-

lings, will teach thee a little of his wisdom, so that thou mayst in time reach a position similar to that which he occupies? Far better will it be for thee to get a few grains of that knowledge which is power, rather than a few grains of that patronage, assistance, or charity, which power is able to give.

The moment that a man becomes largely in debt, he blossoms out into a respectable and responsible member of society. It is not, as many suppose, that he has earned this character before he became entrusted with the property of others. A very little ability, a certain degree of boldness and assurance, a taking exterior, and a willingness to contract to pay the market rate of interest and a little more, will place him in possession of capital beyond the dreams of avarice. Once master of the position, he is invested with all the qualities and virtues that inspire admiration, confidence, and respect. If he wants raw produce, he has merely to hold up his finger, and a dozen ships are loaded for him in the ports of the world. If he wants the fabricated article, he has merely to breathe a wish, and mountainous waggons hasten to unload their heavy treasures at his gate. If he covets that precious metal (or its representatives) which divines call filthy lucre, and economists circulating medium, he has but to send in his card to any banker, and have a sack of it shovelled to him as if it was dirt. These are the gross and material advantages of being in debt—serving as the basis for a superstructure of higher things.

First, there is the immense advance in social position. What doors are closed to the large and noble debtor? What dinner parties would be considered perfect without him? How many needy men are anxious to sit near him at the table, in the hope of learning something useful to guide them in the path which he has seemingly followed with such distinguished success? Who would think of a public meeting without the gigantic debtor in the chair? If a trustee is wanted for a charitable fund, who so fit and proper to be appointed as the leviathan debtor?

If a public company or a joint-stock enterprise is flagging for various reasons, what is wanted to put it firmly and flourishingly upon its legs?—The chairmanship of the enterprising debtor! Did any wild scheme ever commend itself to popular notice, or endeavour to strike root, without sending one of its earliest prospectuses to the energetic and prosperous debtor?—Never!

Is a cellar of choice wine—a rare work of art—a palatial mansion

standing upon one of the finest sites in the metropolis—advertised for sale without an eye to the daring debtor?—I am afraid not. If a seat in Parliament is vacant, who so fit a man to fill it as the active, practical debtor? — as to minor offices — common-councillorships, churchwardenships, directorships, etc., etc., how many of these are humbly and diffidently proffered to the massive debtor? Would he like to enter into a more tender and interesting engagement, how many high and delicate ladies are waiting the commands of their parents, to be sold like cattle to the all-conquering debtor?

Then there is the almost affectionate interest taken in nearly everything that happens to the pampered debtor. If he falls ill, what crowds of people—chiefly creditors—are day after day anxiously consulting his physician, and inquiring after his health. If he meets with an accident, what a number of persons—chiefly creditors—come hurriedly forward with pressing kindness to know if it is likely to be fatal. Many of these kind creatures—chiefly creditors—even go to the length of insuring the life of the important debtor for a considerable sum, so strongly does their interest in him develop itself. If the mammoth debtor goes upon a continental tour for a lengthened period, how many persons—chiefly creditors—are waiting anxiously to give him a joyous welcome back. If his house, or warehouse, is accidentally burnt down, what a number of persons—chiefly creditors —are at once upon the spot to render assistance, and ascertain, if possible, what insurances there are—what amounts, and in what offices.

If the bloated debtor by any chance becomes a defendant in a lawsuit, what a number of persons—chiefly creditors—wish themselves on the jury to try the cause. If it happens to be a Chancery suit, how they watch for every manifestation and decision, as if the spoiled debtor was their only child, going up for some momentous examination. If he gets in a position to require heavy bail, the difficulty is not so much in procuring one satisfactory surety, as in picking from the number offering their services and their bonds. If by any possible combination of circumstances a Titanic debtor could be accused of robbery, or even murder, what a number of trusting individuals—chiefly creditors—with a faith quite touching in its constancy, would believe in his innocence to the very last. When the farce is over and the curtain dropped; when the giant debtor has ceased to borrow or to lend; when the springs that moved him are found to be an inextricable web of confusion, the guide to which is

lost; although the whole glittering fabric of apparent prosperity melts like an icicle in the sun, and many persons—chiefly creditors—find that they have been gilding a gingerbread king, still the semblance of wealth, and the confidence that it excites, will cling to him to the last, as he makes a triumphal entry into the grave.

Seeing that no particular or extraordinary talent is required for debt; seeing that one man is as well adapted for it as another; I am surprised more persons do not adopt this very easy and agreeable mode of getting a living. The ice once broken, every succeeding step is easier than the last. Increase the amount to be borrowed, and the power of borrowing increases in an equal ratio. Under certain conditions, you shall find more difficulty in procuring half-a-crown than fifty thousand pounds, although the security offered in both cases may bear an equal value in relation to the loan required; but having obtained possession of one fifty thousand pounds, you may command a second and a third with ever-increasing ease, rolling your borrowed capital over and over like a ball of snow, and causing more loans to stick to it wherever it moves. Bear in mind, that in the great world of debt, the small debtor is governed by his creditor; the large creditor is governed by his debtor. Large creditors are quiet and tractable, like dancing elephants; small creditors are spiteful and uncertain, like wasps—wasps with a sting.

BANKRUPTCY IN SIX EASY LESSONS.

INTRODUCTION.

S the whole human race must range themselves under two classes, viz., debtors and creditors, it is of vital importance that a man should make himself acquainted, as fully as possible, with at least the chief tribunal whose special function it is to deal with those who cannot or will not pay:—the Bankruptcy Court.

Four men out of five go into business, and two of that number

fail as a matter of course; the wonder is, that this prolific and useful subject has not been taken up scientifically before.

LESSON THE FIRST. THE BUSINESS.

The first thing to do, my young friend, when you start in life, is to settle everything you possess upon your wife. Having done this legally and securely, take a warehouse in a good situation, and begin to buy. That you may be under no alarm about your power to do this, I will explain in a few words, the theory of trade. The greater part of the goods manufactured are made by persons with little capital, and they are compelled to force sales, to get bills of exchange for discount to pay for the raw material. The warehousemen who buy them are men of little or no capital, and they are compelled to hurry sales, to get bills for discount to pay the bills drawn by the manufacturers. And so trade moves, one class continually pushing on another. The necessity to sell is behind every man's back; you, therefore, need be under no concern about your ability to buy. Before you have opened your doors a week, you will scarcely be able to keep the commercial travellers out. Let it be hinted abroad—although it is not absolutely necessary for your success in failure—that your father-in-law is a person of property. It means nothing, but it will be useful in a variety of ways.

LESSON THE SECOND. THE BANK.

In the choice of a bank for discount (which you will not want for a few months), you will find little difficulty. As a rule, perhaps, you will pick out one of the young concerns; but all of them, bear in mind, are urged on by the same necessity to trade, as the merchants and traders. Be easy, bold, and confident in your manner, and careful in your dress. One style does for one kind of bank, another style for another. Judge of this from the names of the directors; and give as a reference your principal creditor, who by this time will take quite a fatherly interest in your welfare. By all means keep a good balance, if it is done by the discount of accommodation bills.

LESSON THE THIRD. THE ACCOUNT BOOKS.

Make this branch of your business your especial study, and keep it in your own hands. Many men understand the true art of figures,

viz., to conceal the truth; few are able to practise it. See that you are not ignorant and unskilful in this useful science. Raise a fictitious capital at the commencement of your business by a stroke of the pen, and enter at the beginning of your cash book, on the left hand side, a respectable, but not a very large sum—say two thousand pounds—the disposal of which imaginary item you can account for amongst your imaginary bad debts. These are fabulous transactions with persons who are supposed to have failed, or exaggerated dealings with persons who really have failed; and the property represented by the figures entered in the books you—take care of. Keep your personal expenses in appearance small, and throw the burden upon the trade expenses. Fail in the third or fourth year, if you are quite prepared for action, and go to the Bankruptcy Court at once, without hesitation. Shun deeds of inspection and assignment, because they place you in the hands of those dissatisfied creditors, who in the Court are made to feel their proper position, and are taught that the man who fails, and renders an account of his failure (if he has not run the estate too close for the expenses of the Court), is a very meritorious member of society. These are chiefly matters of pen and ink, but they are important, and do not let them be neglected.

LESSON THE FOURTH. THE OFFICIAL ASSIGNEE.

You will now be within the power of the Bankruptcy Court, a position not by any means so disagreeable as many persons suppose. As your private property is settled on your wife, you will not be troubled at home with the Messenger, as he is called, and the first person of any importance that you will see is your Official Assignee—a very gentlemanly man to you, as your estate will be large, and so prepared as to give little trouble. You will hand over to him in cash, et cetera, a sum more than sufficient to pay all the expenses of the Court (about sixty per cent. of your assets), and this will place matters on a very amicable footing. He loves you like a brother. You help to pay his salary, or commission—about two thousand a-year—the salaries of the Commissioner, with all the officers in and about the Court, and a good many far away from it—pensioners to the extent of sixteen thousand pounds per annum. It is absurd to suppose that there can be any ill-feeling between you. He goes over your books with you. You began with a capital—good; your books have been well kept—good; your personal expenses are light (light

for a person in your position in society)—good; you have given the estate every attention—better; you have handed over property sufficient to pay all expenses, and declare a dividend of one shilling in the pound before the matter has been in the energetic hands of Mr Official Assignee six weeks—best. Who dares to say that the Court is tardy in collecting and distributing assets? You may sleep, and dream of a first-class certificate.

LESSON THE FIFTH. THE COMMISSIONER.

The Commissioner is obliged, for his salary (about two thousand per annum), to make a show of doing something; and for his judicial dignity, to make an appearance of discouraging bankrupts. But he loves them for the same reason as the Official Assignee—loves them because they pay him; and he loves them more if they give him no trouble. Knowing little or nothing of figures—although having to decide upon them more than upon law—he is, practically, in the hands of the Official Assignee, and is governed by his report in the choice and granting of a certificate.

LESSON THE SIXTH. THE SOLICITOR.

There are not more than two solicitors pleading in Basinghall Street, who have what is called the ear of the Court. You will retain one of these, more for display and respectability than because you require him. He goes over the favourable points of your trading career, lighting them up with a glow of approbation. The sympathizing Commissioner, prepared by the very favourable report of the Official Assignee, is glad to have it in his power to reward you for bringing so good an estate to the Court, by granting an immediate first-class certificate.

WHITE WASHERTON.

NO man loves the metropolis more than I do. I cannot go so far in my admiration of Fleet Street as certain eminent literary authorities, nor can I altogether admit that beyond Hyde Park it is a desert; but I will support any man who boldly asserts that you can get everything in London that you can get in the country; and get it a hundred-fold better. Yet, I must reserve one peculiar and important exception; and that is, the metropolitan organization for the relief of insolvent debtors. Against Basinghall Street, I have nothing to say, nor do I mean to assert that the judges of Portugal Street are hard upon the embarrassed tradesman, or the involved young gentleman whose ignorance of the world and refined tastes have led him into temporary pecuniary difficulties: common gratitude, if no higher feeling, restrains me from spreading such an erroneous and unjust impression. Portugal Street is good, but—and I speak from experience, for I have tried both—White Washerton is better. I should not recommend Harrogate for medicinal waters; I should not recommend Melton Mowbray for pork pies—Banbury for tarts—Epping for sausages—or Chichester for rumpsteak puddings; but, for a perfect, easy, and rapid relief from a mass of involvent debt, combined with rural life, field sports, and the advantages of neighbouring marine bathing, I know of no place like White Washerton under the sun. To call the judge who presides over White Washerton insolvents, kind, gentlemanly, and lenient, is to use terms too weak to convey the proper idea of his treatment of them. He is thoughtful for the debtor; sympathizing for the debtor; and fatherly to the debtor. It may be—and report says it is—that he has himself suffered from the obtrusive competition of trade, and knows how difficult it is to resist the overwhelming flood of wines, clothes, jewels, and cash, that sweeps over the young man of position. In every dashing young insolvent who comes before him, he sees a reflected picture of his own youth; in every opposing creditor, a copy of the two-faced harpies—fawning on one side, snarling on the other—who alternately wheedled and threatened him when he was a peti-

tioner in a similar court to that in which he now presides as a judge. It may be, that the receipt of a large annual salary for little work, develops the benevolent side of a man's character, and causes him to serve out large quantities of that unstrained mercy which blesses the giver without taking anything out of his pocket. Any way, explain it how we will, or leave it unexplained, White Washerton, in addition to all its various local advantages, possesses an insolvent commissioner whose Christian charity requires only to be fully known, to leave Portugal Street a barren waste, and the metropolitan Dracos biting their solitary nails in the awful silence of a deserted law-court. I may be unwise in communicating my knowledge to the indebted public in general; but a strong desire to benefit my fellow-creatures has overcome every selfish consideration, and I record my experiences regardless of the results.

At ten, thirty, A.M., this morning, I stood in the streets of White Washerton a debtor to the extent of from forty to fifty thousand pounds. At six, thirty, P.M., this evening, I am sitting waiting for dinner, in a tavern not far from Bow Church, as free from debt as the crossing-sweeper before the door. There has been no personal annoyance from the idle curiosity of friends; there is no irritating report in the copy of the evening newspaper which I hold in my hand: I have drunk the legal waters of oblivion, far from the prying eyes of obtruding witnesses, in the tree-shadowed Court of the rural city of White Washerton; and as I left an altered man, in a first-class express carriage in the middle of the day, I saw in an over-due Parliamentary train, the stern faces of some of my dilatory creditors, who had made up their minds to oppose at the eleventh hour, when my examination had closed soon after the tenth. The way in which all this was arranged shall be immediately explained.

When I was in a most embarrassing position, with so many writs served upon me, that I could not distinguish the several suits—those for wine, from those for jewels; those for money debts of my own, from liabilities entered into to oblige obliging friends—my eye rested, one morning at breakfast, upon the following advertisement in the columns of a leading paper:—

'TO THE EMBARRASSED.—How many a noble-hearted young man has sunk into an early grave under the oppressive load of accumulated debt, and all for the want of a little timely advice and assistance! Let all those who are suffering from pecuniary embarrassments, and who wish to be relieved without publicity or personal annoyance, apply at once to Mr Ledger, negotiator, No. 2, Paradise Gardens, Gray's Inn Lane.'

I need scarcely say that I applied at once to Mr Ledger, and found him a very shrewd, affable, agreeable, comforting, business man. I laid a plain statement of my affairs before him, and we soon found that everything was on what he called the debit, and nothing (except just enough to pay expenses) on what he also called the credit side. That night (this is only ten days ago) I went down by arrangement to White Washerton, and took prepared lodgings at the house of a brother of Mr Ledger's—Mr Erasmus Ledger, Solicitor, Augustine Square. I found everything very elegant and comfortable. Miss Ledger sang Italian songs, and played German sonatas to amuse us of an evening; and, in the day, I took exercise with the cricket-club, or joined pic-nic parties with the young lady and her friends. How different was all this from the gloomy Jewish sponging-houses of Chancery Lane, or the prison in Whitecross Street! I had all the comforts of society and a home, while I was acquiring by residence the rights of a White Washerton citizen.

Two days of this agreeable life was sufficient to complete the first stage in the Ledger process; and, at the end of this time, it was necessary that I should be arrested. I *was* arrested at the hands of an intimate friend, and lodged in the clean, well-ventilated gaol of White Washerton for five days; which period I chiefly passed in smoking my cigar on the roof of the prison, enjoying a splendid view of the surrounding country. At the end of this time bail was provided by the thoughtful and systematic Ledgers, and I returned once more to the refinement and luxuries of Augustine Square.

In driving or riding about the town and the outskirts during the next three days, I saw a number of men, whose gay, easy, dashing manners and town dress made me suspect that they were on a visit to White Washerton, for the same purpose as myself; and I found, upon inquiry, that my suspicions were correct. They were all clients and lodgers of Mr Erasmus Ledger, sent down from London by his energetic brother, and parcelled off into other lodging-houses belonging to the solicitor, because they were second and third-class insolvents, while I ranked with, and paid for, the accommodation of the first. They enjoyed the excursion as much as I did; joined in the field sports; hired open carriages to visit local spots of beauty or interest; examined the architectural and antiquarian features of the city; and even made short journeys to the neighbouring sea-coast. They dropped up to town, one by one, as their examinations came off, healthy in body, relieved in mind; and making room for other visitors, who arrived to take their vacated places.

Three more days of this easy life carried me to the morning of my examination, and I went before the fatherly judge, with no assets, but an elaborate schedule accounting for the disposal of the property I had consumed. I was supported by Mr Erasmus Ledger, who had got the ear and the confidence of the Court. I was opposed by only two creditors—one for wine, the other for accommodation-bills. Mr Ledger laid my plain, well-varnished, candid statement before the judge. He admitted that I had been imprudent—perhaps extravagant; but it was less my fault than the fault of the London tradesmen; who will tempt young men with credit, with a perseverance that sweeps all resistance away. I had not had sufficient moral strength to resist; few of us have (nod of approval from the bench); I had sunk under a weight of temptation and debt; chance had brought me to that Court for relief; blood could not be had out of a stone.

Mr Ledger knew that this last common-place never failed in its effect upon the judge. There is something so simple, yet conclusive about it. Blood could *not* be had out of a stone. What a world of argument and mental exertion this axiom saved! It was not inscribed as the regulating maxim over the façade of the Court; but the judge had it always in his mind, always before his eyes, always ringing in his ears, and every judgment that he gave was governed by it.

My wine creditor attempted a feeble opposition; but the inferior quality of his wines, and the exorbitant prices charged for them, were properly placed before the judge, and that tradesman received a severe judicial rebuke for attempting to ruin the constitutions of young men, by selling them a wretched, poisonous, fiery port, at five pounds the dozen.

The accommodation-bill holder next made an attempt at opposition, much damaged by the ill-success of his companion, the wine-merchant. The first question that he was asked from the bench was, what were his rates of discount? His reply was, that they varied according to circumstances. This answer was not satisfactory. What were his average charges? What were his charges in this particular instance? Sixty per cent. (the judge was indignant); that is, sixty per cent. per annum. He was called a usurer; a discounting vampire, sucking the blood of the unwary and inexperienced; he was not allowed to explain that, notwithstanding his high rate of interest, he was a loser of several thousand pounds; he had no right to stand in a court, the judge of which could never allow himself to listen to any man who exacted sixty per cent.

I passed gently and smoothly through the painless ordeal. It was, however, sufficiently trying to keep up a wholesome excitement in the nervous system. As I shook hands, a free man, with Mr Erasmus Ledger, before stepping into the carriage which drove me to the railway station, I whispered in his ear that I hoped it would soon become as fashionable to visit White Washerton for the Benefit of the Act, as it used to be to visit Cheltenham for the benefit of the waters.

BUYING IN THE CHEAPEST MARKET.

WAS born and nourished under the wing of political economy: not the theory, but the science reduced to practice. I have known many men in my time whose principles were without a flaw that the keenest logician could detect—who had Smith, Bentham, Mill, supply, and demand, at their fingers' ends—who could discourse most eloquent music about markets, population, capital, rent, profits; but who in themselves were imprudent members of society, improvident centres of enormous families, borrowers of money at usurious interest, and strugglers up to their necks in seas of debt. My principles may not have been as sound, my reasoning powers not as perfect, as those of my friends, but I floated harmlessly over the ocean of debt—I was a lender and not a borrower of money at usurious interest, and I did not enter upon a matrimonial engagement until I had carefully examined the ratio which capital at that period bore to population.

One of the earliest pieces of practical wisdom drawn from the science of political economy, and instilled into me by a thoughtful and far-seeing parent, was the well-known maxim about buying in the cheapest market. I say, well-known, but I am sorry to have also to state, that it is better known than trusted. Of all who hear it, and comprehend what it means, how many have the moral courage and industry to act up to it? Who amongst those who have the ability to find, will take the trouble to find the cheapest market? I would address my present observations to persons about to marry; but I know that it is useless to do so. They are too young, too ill taught, too

gushing, too generous, too believing, too romantic, too imprudent, too much wanting in that cold but very valuable quality of calculation, to listen to my words, and to benefit by the utterances of my experience. I turn from them with hopeless contempt to that other class comprised under the general title of parents and guardians; people who, if they have not learned wisdom, have at least lived long enough to test the emptiness of the wild romance of life.

When the preliminaries for my wedding were fixed, the first necessity of my position was to furnish a house; and the first duty of my position was to find the cheapest market for doing so. This important undertaking rarely falls to the lot of a man more than once in the course of his natural life, and it is incumbent upon him, therefore, to be careful how he performs it. There are two modes of setting about the task which naturally suggest themselves to the minds of the unthinking. The first is to contract with a fashionable upholsterer, who will supply all the regular elegancies of life, give you no trouble about selection, even in the number and subjects of the volumes for your library, and by the time you find you have got everything together very pretty and correct, like some thousands of your neighbours in the same position in society, he will send in a heavy bill, which you will duly pay, as your neighbours have done before you.

The second mode of furnishing a house is the one usually considered economical, and is performed by attending sales and depôts for second-hand furniture, in the hope of finding bargains. People buy at such places articles of inferior workmanship, manufactured expressly for the peculiar market, showy to the eye, weak in structure, with every fault carefully varnished over. They are proud of their purchases for a few weeks—after which time the articles disappear, and the song of triumph is heard no more.

I need scarcely say, that neither of these plans was my plan. I had a certain sum of money at my disposal, and I knew that amongst the tradesmen to whom I must apply for the articles I required, there must be a large number to whom that money would be more than ordinarily welcome. I knew that in the ranks of trade there is always a large number of shopkeepers struggling to maintain a position without capital—embarrassed with writs, judges' orders, bills of sale, and county court judgments, and exposed to all the temptations which such a state of things must necessarily produce. The first step was to discover the names and addresses of these people:

possessing which, I should then be on the high road to the cheapest market.

In the City of London, conducted by a gentleman of the name of Perry, is an organization established, I believe, for the protection of trade, called the Bankrupt and Insolvent Registry Office. One part of Mr Perry's system is to send to subscribers of a small annual sum a printed list, about once each week, of the names and addresses of all persons whose trading difficulties have compelled them to give either a judge's order, a bill of sale, or to sign a county court judgment. The date of the execution of these instruments is carefully given, and every information that will enable you to form a judgment as to the pecuniary position and struggles of a large number of the traders of the country. I became a subscriber to Mr Perry's office, and received my list every week, which told me all, and more than I required to know. In about two months, with a little trouble and diplomatic skill, aided by the all-powerful money that I had at my command—I furnished a large house from top to bottom in a style far above the average, and at less than one-fourth of the usual cost. A couple of examples will explain sufficiently how this was done.

Looking down my Trade Protection List one morning carelessly, over the breakfast table, my eye rested, amongst other things, upon the following record of commercial distress:

'JUDGE'S ORDERS.

'Enoch Baxter, Cabinet-maker, 58, Great Carcass Street, Sussex Town. Judge's Order for £22 to Robert Dunham and Co.; dated April 14th, 1857.'

After breakfast, I walked out, and a Sussex Town omnibus passing me at the moment, I took my place outside, and in half an hour's time I found myself walking leisurely up Great Carcass Street. I stopped before the window of number fifty-eight, a small unpretending shop, with no appearance of abundance in the interior, and no appearance of scarcity. There was a small display of fire-screens, couches, card-tables, easy-chairs, loo-tables, and a splendid marble-topped sideboard, which particularly struck my taste, and which I have now in my possession, placed in the post of honour in my luxurious dining-room. I opened the door, which clicked a small bell, and entered the shop, when I was immediately waited upon by a tall, quiet-looking, timid man, who turned out to be the proprietor, Mr Enoch Baxter. It is impossible for me to explain why I did so, but at the moment when he advanced towards me, by a kind of impulse,

I rattled loudly some loose gold that I had in my trousers' pocket, and the sound seemed to have an electrical effect upon Mr Baxter's nerves. I asked to look at his Post Office London Directory, and as he informed me that he did not possess one, I observed his countenance assume a desponding expression of extreme disappointment. I asked the price of a music-stool, and his face brightened instantly with the hopeful expectation of a customer. These little surface indications taught me that Mr Baxter was an easily-managed, impressible man, and I proceeded to manage him accordingly.

'Noble piece of furniture,' I observed, alluding to the marble-topped sideboard.

'Yes, sir,' he replied quickly, with great animation, 'one of the most finished things we ever turned out, and only sixty guineas.'

'Ah,' I returned in a desponding tone, 'such sums are rarely spent upon single articles of furniture now, especially in these days of commercial distress.' The proprietor gave vent to a heavy sigh.

'I should think,' I continued in a sympathizing tone, 'that the neighbourhood you find yourself in is scarcely adapted to the class of articles you seem to produce?'

'It is not, sir,' replied the proprietor; 'there is no local gentry, and our trade is cut up by the cheap, advertising, rubbish shops in other parts of the town.'

'Walnut?' I inquired, again directing my attention to the sideboard.

'No, sir; pollard oak.'

'Several large failures in the City again this morning,' I remarked, 'and the Bank rate of discount, I am told, is likely to go up to twelve per cent.' The gold, somehow, again clinked in my pocket.

'Where will it all end?' sighed the proprietor.

'Where?' I responded, walking round the sideboard.

'Sir,' said the proprietor, in an almost affectionate manner, 'if you would really like that splendid article, I will knock off ten guineas, and put it in to you at fifty.'

'These things,' I replied, 'are all regulated by the law of supply and demand, and the state of the money-market; if I offered you twenty-two pounds——'

The mention of that peculiar sum (the amount of the judge's order) seemed to strike him with a sudden pang; and I think he staggered as he gasped out faintly—

'No, sir, no; it would not pay the cost of the raw material.'

The time, I considered, had now arrived for me to take the decisive step. I calmly took one of my address-cards from my pocket-book and wrote upon it my maximum amount, five-and-twenty pounds.

'There,' said I, as I placed it in the open hand of the hesitating proprietor, 'five-and-twenty pounds, send the article home to that address, and there is your money, cash on delivery.'

Late at night I found the sideboard standing in my dining-room, and a receipt for twenty-five pounds lying on the table signed in a somewhat tremulous hand, 'Enoch Baxter.'

Encouraged by my success with the embarrassed cabinet-maker, I next experimented upon a pianoforte merchant, who I found from my list was suffering from a county court judgment for fifteen pounds eighteen shillings. He was a common, cunning-looking man, with a good deal of the mechanic in his appearance; and he gave me the idea of a working carpenter, dressed in a pianoforte-tuner's clothes. He was fetched, I presume, from a public-house to attend upon me; for he came in, smelling very strongly of tobacco-smoke.

There was an instrument, noble in exterior, with all the latest improvements, delicacy of touch, metallic sounding-board, etc., upon which I fixed my attention, while the proprietor rattled over the keys with short, thick, grubby fingers, performing one of those brilliant flourishes peculiar to people who undertake to exhibit the capabilities of a piano for the purpose of effecting a sale.

I quietly inquired the price.

'Well, sir,' said he, discontinuing his harmony, and looking up at me with his small, sharp eyes, 'we couldn't make a hinstrument of that kind to horder under seventy pund; but we bought it on the quiet from a man who shut up his shop and bolted to Hostralia, and we can say fifty pund for it.'

I saw the kind of man I had to deal with, and I did not indulge in any unnecessary negotiation.

'Eighteen pounds,' I said, after examining the instrument, 'is what I can give for that piano.'

'Make more for firewood,' returned the proprietor, shortly, closing the lid of the case.

'That's my card,' I replied, giving him my address, 'eighteen pounds; at home any evening this week after eight.'

I was right in my calculations. The next night, about half-past

ten, I received a visit from the pianoforte merchant, who had a cart with the instrument waiting at the door.

'Say twenty pund,' said he, 'and I'm your man.'

'You have my bidding,' I replied, with dignity.

'You warn't born yesterday,' he returned, with a wink; and, coming closer to me, in a confidential manner, he continued, 'keep it dark, you know; keep it dark.'

Whether he paid off the county court judgment with the money I cannot tell, but I saw his name in the list of bankrupts a few weeks after this transaction; and at the examination before the commissioner, there was a judicial rebuke about reckless trading and making away with stock, which I, of course, could not help, as I was only carrying out the law of supply and demand, and acting upon the maxim of buying in the cheapest market.

TWENTY SHILLINGS IN THE POUND.

THE firm of Petty, Larceny, and Co., the great haberdashers, is a monument of remarkable trading skill. It has been established more than a century. Old Petty retired with a colossal fortune, and young Petty, the old Petty of the present firm, was member of Parliament for a cotton district. Some of the Larcenies have been at the bar, and one is a very high dignitary in the Church, while he who stands in the place of the old original Larceny, and manages the business, has the reputation of being one of the smartest traders in the City of London. The first stone of their prosperity was laid by the purchase of job-lots, or goods sold at a sacrifice. They found a mine of wealth under their feet, and they did not neglect to work it. They got a double reputation: one for always being ready with cash for goods to any extent, the other for always selling goods thirty per cent. under the market-price. They always paid twenty shillings in the pound, but it was for forty shillings' worth of goods, and that, my simple friend, is a very different thing from buying forty shillings' worth of goods, and paying twenty shillings for them. In the first instance, you are a

keen trader, buying at a discount of fifty per cent.; in the second, you are a worthless, broken scamp, paying ten shillings in the pound. You, who possess a mathematical head, cannot probably find much difference in the two things, but act upon your conviction, and see the result. You, as the payer of the despised ten shillings in the pound, the payer of one pound for two, shall enter one of our palatial receptacles of merchandise in company with Mr Larceny, the payer of twenty shillings in the pound, the buyer of two pounds for one. Not an assistant in the place, not a head of a department, but what will be at once at the humble service of Mr Larceny, ready to throw at his feet the rich cashmeres of India, the soft sables of the North, the costly fabrics of the South, perfumes of Araby the blest, jasper, onyx, and all precious stones. Let him take them at his own price, and upon his own terms. Now comes your turn, my simple friend, and the rich, full stream of commerce does not flow so freely at your feet. Will you be kind enough to give your name? They cannot find exactly what you want, although your desires are not extravagant. You fancy you heard your name going down a pipe, and you were right. Will you have the goodness to step down to the counting-house? You step down, and see a managing clerk. Another time they will be most happy, etc. You have learnt the difference, my simple friend, between paying ten shillings for a pound, and buying a pound for ten shillings.

Messrs Petty, Larceny, and Co. thrive apace, and suck up in their vortex many spiritless businesses of the same kind in the neighbourhood. They buy up a pile of buildings; they cover with their warehouses half a street. Sometimes it happens in the course of trade that complications arise between principal and agent, consignor and consignee, buyer and seller; the money-market is tight, cash is scarce, and a few thousand pounds' worth of goods is sold in consequence, at a sacrifice much more alarming than usual. What makes matters worse is, that Messrs Petty, Larceny's cheque—which though dishonourable was never dishonoured—does not find its way to the rightful owner, the agent employed in the matter having put a finish to dishonest proceedings by an act of embezzlement. This brings the transaction into open court, and some virtuous counsel, whose wholesome indignation has been paid for as per brief delivered, does not hesitate to stigmatize the conduct of Messrs Petty, Larceny, and Co. as immoral and dishonest; to call a sacrifice a downright robbery; job-lots nothing but stolen goods, and to say that the receiver is as

bad as the thief. Poor fellow! he knows when he utters the last sentiment, that his law is the reverse of sound, and that he is the veriest stump-orator that ever stood in a Court of Justice. Perhaps he is thinking of some miserable fence, or marine-store dealer, whose limited capital, want of enterprise, and wretched habitation, under the constant surveillance of the police, render *him* in the eyes of the law a receiver in every respect as bad as the thief; but the splendid pile of warehouses that bears the name of Messrs Petty, Larceny, and Co. can never be the receptacle of any goods, but what have been bought in a respectable manner, and under the laws of supply and demand. When Mr Larceny leaves his business, about five in the afternoon, the policeman on the beat runs to open the door of his carriage, which he certainly would not do for a man that was obnoxious to the law.

Some people there may be, who gossip about the story in the City, and, like good members of society as they are, profess a moral repugnance to any man who stoops to make money by such dishonest practices; but their words lose something of their weight when we find them, in a few days afterwards, in Mr Larceny's private counting-house, with a piece of coloured paper in their hands, evidently torn from a banker's cheque-book. Sundry old ladies and highly respectable mothers of families profess to be greatly shocked when they read the account in the newspapers, and exclaim, 'What an immoral place Messrs Petty, Larceny's shop must be for the young men!' But if we lounge towards the shop in question, about three o'clock on a July afternoon, we shall find the same ladies in great force, seated on the short-backed chairs, and asking the attendants to show them 'some of those stolen—ahem, that is, remarkably cheap goods that they have to sell.' When Mr Larceny goes into the markets on the next occasion, his friends cluster round him more attentive than ever, probably from joy that so dear a friend has not been rudely snatched from them. Society does not turn its back upon Mr Larceny; far from it, its doors are always open to any man who can send his own footman to knock at them. Prisons of all kinds, Houses of Correction, Silent Systems, Penal Servitudes, Hulks, Queen's Benches, Old Baileys, Bankruptcy Courts, and lastly, Workhouses, were never built or organized for men like Mr Larceny. It is the fools who suffer, while the rogues thrive.

Third-class bankrupts, with certificates suspended for two years, with protection refused for six months; transported felons and oakum-

pickers of various degrees, become what they are, that Larceny House may have its much-admired stone façade, designed by Bubble Walling, Esq., F.S.A., that Mr Larceny's mansion in Huckaback Square may be adorned with the latest Rubenses, Raffaelles, and Correggios, and that Larceny Park, Richmond, Surrey, may be one of the great landscape features of the county.

Such is the brazen image of twenty shillings in the pound, before which men fall down and worship. If any one doubts how much better it is to sin than to be sinned against, let him look at a commercial adventurer of a different stamp.

We have heard a good deal of the fraudulent debtor. We know his picture pretty well by this time. He never keeps a cash-book. He makes away with stock in a mysterious manner, and his furniture is always settled on his wife. He has been insolvent once—a bankrupt once, and he has compounded with his creditors several times. He is, of course, a great scamp, because—he cannot pay twenty shillings in the pound. But has ever any one looked calmly and dispassionately into his conduct, to see whether there is any substratum of honesty underlying the surface of his character? Has any one ever tried to discover the original character of his misfortunes—I beg pardon, his rogueries? Are his creditors aware, when they are so loud in their complaints against him, that in many cases his numerous failures spring out of the one original insolvency; because he was weak and considerate enough to grant fraudulent preferences and renew old debts? Are they aware that they have been supplying him with goods and money, for many years, at an enormous profit and interest that act as an insurance against risk, and make ten shillings in the pound a remunerative dividend? I am afraid not. He may walk about in a leaky shoe and a battered hat, but he is always assumed to have a snug competency put on one side in a quiet way. If he is really fraudulent, the law has provided for his punishment in a very peculiar manner. He goes before a Bankruptcy Commissioner with a balance-sheet, and a variety of accounts which, as far as totals are concerned, are made to agree with each other with wonderful accuracy; and the said Commissioner, knowing nothing of figures, and ascertaining from the official assignee, that he has not been too fraudulent to provide for the expenses of the court, does not see any good that can arise to the estate from further delay, and grants a common certificate or licence to trade, as a matter of course. If, on the other hand, he is not fraudulent, but unfortunate, and flies to the sanctuary

of the court, under the pressure of unavoidable loss and misfortune, having allowed the commercial whirlwind to overtake him before providing payment for the shelter as the Act directs, he will find surly officials, a severe Draconian judge, and, in all probability, a suspension of certificate. Woe upon him, if at any time, under the influence of pressure, a sense of honour, or for increased facilities of trade, he has given what the law calls a fraudulent preference; he will then find to his cost how much more culpable it is in the eye of justice to give than to receive. He will suffer for his ill-advised, though well-intentioned act, while the receiver of the benefit—the fraudulent creditor—will walk away respected and unscathed in all the immaculate invulnerability of twenty shillings in the pound.

The fraudulent creditor is a person that does not come so prominently before us; he does not stink in the nostrils of commerce, for his cheques are always paid, and he never had a bill sent back in his life. He is an oily man, who has made many bad debts during his commercial life, and who always seems to extract nourishment from them. He has generally been very badly treated by the fraudulent debtor, but while the latter has scarcely a bed to lie down upon, the fraudulent creditor manages to keep a good balance at his banker's. He seldom attends, and will never take the chair, at a meeting of creditors. When an arrangement is proposed, he always declines, at present, to come in. He has scruples and objections, and he takes time to consider. He likes to be treated with individually. God forbid that he should be the means of carrying the affair to the Bankruptcy Court, and injuring others; but he does not think that there has been a fair statement rendered, and he would rather lose the whole of his debt—ill as he can afford it—than accept a dividend less than the estate ought to pay. He holds out firmly, and when others get ten shillings, he gets fifteen; when others get fifteen, he gets twenty. Failing this, he stands over until the debtor begins trade again, and then he advances his claim upon the new estate, to the injury of the new creditors. He is one of the most obstructive and dishonest men in trade, and yet who would refuse his acceptance for five thousand pounds? It may be that the twenty shillings in the pound, with which the bill will be paid, will be very dirty shillings—shillings that ought to have been in the pockets of other people, but they fulfil the commercial requirements as to weight, and the code of trading morality exacts no other condition.

If I have shocked the political economist by exhibiting any irre-

verence for the laws which regulate the operations of commerce, the theory of trade, exchange, markets, supply and demand, I humbly apologize. My purpose was not to question the dogmas of economical science, but to put my finger upon some of the moral blots in commerce, and to ask that those who are always crying out aloud for purification, should not strain at a bankrupt gnat, and swallow a felonious camel.

DEBTOR AND CREDITOR.

SUPPOSE we are all born with a mission. Those who do not find one ready-made to their hands, are never happy until they have created one; and therefore it comes to the same thing in the end, whether we are born with a mission or without one. My mission has been to give credit. I am the successor of the late John Smirker. In whatever books of accounts my name stands, you will always find it on the right side, with a balance in my favour. My father thought the best thing he could do to settle me in life was to buy the good-will of the business of the late John Smirker, a business not only established for fifty years in the City of London, but possessing flourishing branches in the cities of Oxford and Cambridge at the same time. I entered upon my new sphere in a calm and dutiful manner; neither desponding nor enthusiastic. I am naturally of a quiet and meditative turn of mind; given to inquiry, and, perhaps, rather quick in perceiving necessary reforms, though the last man in the world to have the robust energy to carry them out. My predecessor, the late John Smirker, in giving over the long list of book-debts that my father had purchased, dilated very warmly upon the immense value of customers who never took less than five years' credit. 'What is a business,' he inquired, 'without book-debts? A thing without root, sir,—wholly without root. You have no hold upon your connection. In fact, you *have* no connection. Without book-debts, they come to-day, and they go to-morrow.' I did not dispute this position, for I never argue. He was the born tradesman, and acted upon his precepts.

A man need not leave the world for the church or a monkish

seclusion to learn patience and to mortify the passions, while the ranks of trade are open to him. Neither need a man who wishes to see the world, as it is called, and study his fellow-men, spend his money in travelling through Europe, and his nights in the streets, while the ranks of trade are open to him. Neither need a reflective law-reformer retire with his ponderous tomes to some eremitical and inaccessible nook in the innermost of all Inner Temples, there to perfect principles which, when forced upon the world, shall promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number, while the ranks of trade are open to him. Christian recluse, student of the world, and ardent Benthamite, may all take their places behind the glass of my countinghouse-door, and find their time not unprofitably expended.

The greatest difficulty that I labour under is infants—sturdy infants. They bristle up in every other page of my costly ledger (costly, I call it, because it is nearly all I got for my ten thousand pounds); they are more costly under the head of Cambridge than London; and more fruitful under the head of Oxford than Cambridge. Physically they seem to be a very fine family of robust responsible young men; legally they are held to be weak, and irresponsible idiots. Visually they stand before me as a race of palpable, moustached, solid giants; but when I try to touch them with the strong arm of the law, like the spectres of the Brocken, they melt into thin air, and the strong arm of the law becomes strangely paralyzed. Young Lord Merthyr Tydvil (at present at College) is a fair average specimen of the infant debtor. Let him sit for his portrait under two phases,—out of court and in court. Out of court, then, he rides a fine, high-spirited horse, which he manages with the ease and grace of an old patrician horseman. In the cricket-field he bats like a young Hercules, and bowls with the velocity of the catapult. On the river it is a sight to see him pull the stroke-oar against wind and tide; and he is the reverse of contemptible when he puts on the gloves with a bargeman of the Cam. He wrestles and does the backfall better than any man in all Illyria. His age is twenty years and nine months. His muscles are well set, and he looks older. He handles a skilful cue at the billiard-table, and makes an occasional bet upon horse-races with a good deal of judgment. Intellectually he seems to know pretty well what he is about. I don't think his name is across any accommodation bills, but what he has received half the cash for. As to the amusements and vices of the metropolis, he is one of the best judges of them upon town, and acts as mentor to many

others infants. His taste in wine is considered good, and his verdict on the merits of a new ballet-dancer is held to be final.

In court, Lord Merthyr present a very different appearance. That collar, which used to stand up with such unbending parchment-like stiffness, the admiration and envy of his companions, is now, in the eyes of the law, turned down over each shoulder with infantine grace, and fastened with a ribbon of most becoming simplicity. That Chesterfield, poncho, sack, outer garment, coat, cloak, or whatever it is called, which had such a mature, distinguished, Tattersall, club-like air from Hyde Park corner to Blackwall, is now, in the eyes of the law, converted into a juvenile pinafore, fastened round the waist with a school-boy's belt, and conferring on its wearer the much-coveted gift of perpetual youth. That embroidered cigar-case—suspicious gift—filled with the choicest products of Havannah, at costly price, vanishes, in the eye of the law, or becomes transformed into a box of sweetmeats, provided by the thoughtful care of a mother or a sister. That onyx-handled bamboo-cane, which taps the neatest of boots, is now, in the eyes of the law, a mere rounder stick, or an implement used in guiding a hoop.

Those rooms at College, decorated with pictures in the chastest taste, and littered with boxing-gloves, broken-pipes, and champagne corks, are, in the eyes of the law, the cradle of a child—a child who possesses a charmed life, invulnerable to the shafts of the hateful sheriff. Poor, young, innocent, neglected, infant nobleman—type of some hundreds of children that I find upon my books, or rather the books of the late John Smirker, my predecessor—when I hear that thy aristocratic father, Earl Merthyr Tydvil, is in Italy, with —— no matter, I will not dwell upon the painful subject, and that the paternal acres are safely lodged in a dingy office in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, I feel a sense of pity for thee springing up in my snobbish, tradesman's heart. I have fed thee, and I have clothed thee, and I look upon thee as my own. Even if the law did not throw its protecting shield before thee, I would not touch a hair of thy patrician, infant head; although thy ingratitude were ten times greater than it is. I am not unreasonable, and can make allowance for the feelings of a boy whose ancestors were descended from the earliest Normans; I do not ask for positive affection, but only for a slight diminution of contempt. Spoiled child of trade, and chosen one of the law, let thy commercial father know thy wants and wishes, and he is content.

But Shadrach, junior, when you stand up in court, pleading

infancy with all the childish grace of an Israelite that knows no guile, I am amused at so clever an adaptation of Christian customs, but I am astonished at the learned credulity of the Bench. It is true that your people have no registry of baptisms, and everything, therefore, depends upon your own assertion; but I have known you so many years about town, I have watched your fully developed frame standing out prominently in most places of public resort; I have witnessed your intellectual keenness in places where keenness was no rare quality, that, in my eyes, your back is beginning to bend, and your hair becoming silvered with gray, and I marvel much that a paternal law gathers you as a trusting, trusted innocent in the folds of its sheltering arms. There are many octogenarian debtors upon my books, or rather the books of the late John Smirker, my beloved Shadrach, who are more in need of legal protection than your youthful self.

The next rose which the law has planted in the path of debt—the next thorn which it has planted in the path of credit—is the Statute of Limitations. A man of untutored reasoning powers, whose faculties had not been sharpened into an unnatural state of acuteness by legal study, would suppose that the longer a debt stood unpaid, the more would the obligation be increased. He would be astonished, therefore, to find that just at the moment when he was about to claim an old debt with interest, simple and compound, and was probably going to reproach the debtor with keeping out of the way so long—that what he considered to be a moral crime was an act of well-calculated thriftiness, having the effect of annulling the claim according to Act of Parliament. It would be difficult to explain to such a man upon what principle an Act was framed, that allowed every debtor to go free who contrived to keep out of the way of his creditor six years. The wonderful doctrine that the more you wrong a man in trade the more you may, being embodied in a statute having legal force, is encouraging to that class that I call debtors; but is not so encouraging to that other large, and very useful, tax-paying class that I call creditors. The inference is, that the State wishes to cultivate the first at the expense of the second. Or, perhaps, it is only a masked movement intended by discouraging the second to destroy the first? When the Right Honourable Lord Battleaxe, K.C.B., takes as a rule, from his tradesmen, five years' credit, he has only to stretch the period one year more to carry it into eternity.

I certainly was delighted to find the Reverend Origen Bilk, M.A., whom I—or rather the late John Smirker—had nursed through the

different stages of fighting Oxonian, plucked undergraduate, crammed B.A., down to the living of St Vitus-in-the-Fens, pleading 'statute-run,' and declining to pay for the college extravagances which he had indulged in with such vigorous prodigality. It is a good sign when a man—especially a clergyman—so far reforms the errors of his youth as to turn his back upon his early dissipations, even to the extent of repudiating payment for them. If ever the protecting shield of legal mercy was righteously extended over the prostrate form of the suffering debtor, it is in the case of the Reverend Origen Bilk, M.A. He has suffered much from the ruthless hands of the importunate creditor, who insisted upon clothing him with the richest purple and the finest linen, feeding him with the daintiest viands, and nourishing him with the rarest wines, and who now would seek him out in the calm seclusion of his clerical hermitage, and who—did not a considerate law most benevolently interfere—would destroy the unruffled serenity of that meditative mind, which now dwells upon things that are higher than the tailor's bill which perisheth.

The same tenderness to debtors who keep out of the way, distinguishes even some of the severest laws which have been the product of our recent legislation. The debtor is the darling of the law, and it cannot find it in its heart to deal harshly with him. The new Bills of Exchange Act, which allows me the tyranny of a judgment in the short period of twelve days, supposing that my victim has no valid plea or answer that he is not indebted to me, breaks down entirely if my victim keeps out of the way for six clear months; and my thirst for vengeance is tantalized with the tortures of the old, tardy, and expensive mode of proceeding. If I apply for the more humble assistance of the County Court, I find I have still many weeks to wait before the pressure of business will allow of my obtaining a hearing. When my victim comes up and tells a plaintive story of his inability to pay in less than a given time of very long duration, the judge, imbued with the proper spirit of the law, inclines his ear to the dictates of mercy, checks the eager tyranny of the heartless creditor, and grants an order to pay, in twelve easy instalments. When the time for the first and second payment has long passed without my victim making any attempt to keep to his bond, I have then the option of procuring what is called a judgment summons, which, if I am fortunate enough to get it served personally upon my victim, within a certain time, will fix another remote day for a new trial, when my victim will have to show cause why he

failed in his contract. If the claim should be under twenty pounds, and my victim be a single young man victim, residing in furnished lodgings, with no estate, properly so called, he has merely to state this fact to the willing ear of the court, and leave me, like a baffled tiger, howling for my prey. If my victim thinks proper to set sail for the Cocos Islands, or some other land, where creditors cease from troubling, and the debtor is at rest, I can watch him go on board his bounding bark, and, like Calypso, mourn for the departure of my Ulysses; but, alas! I can do no more, for he only owes me nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and elevenpence. Twopence more, and—shades of Solon and Lycurgus—I am avenged!

When I turn over the old unpaid bills of exchange of my predecessor, the late John Smirker, and find amongst them many under five pounds, I am reminded of an old Act passed in the time of George the Third, and never yet repealed, that is a perfect triumph of protective legislation. The bill of exchange—the pride and glory of modern commerce—is looked upon as a luxury intended only for the enjoyment of the wholesale trade, and only granted to the retail under the most praiseworthy precautions. Poor Smirker's bills, I need not say, are so much waste paper; for he had no idea of the requirements of the law touching the implements he was dealing with. A bill of exchange, according to George the Third—I say according to him, because he was anything but a royal nonentity in the state—if under five pounds, must not be drawn at a longer period than twenty-one days; it must be paid away on the same day as that on which it is drawn; its endorsement must set forth the name and address of the person to whom it is endorsed, and such endorsement, with every name upon it but the acceptors', must bear the signature of an attesting witness! If any one of these requirements is neglected, it is fatal to the validity of the instrument. When this cautious clause was perfected, the old king must have felt that, although he had entrusted a dangerous squib in the hands of the small ignorant traders of the country, he had taken every precaution to issue directions for letting it off, so that the case might not burst and injure their fingers. Our present rulers must be of the same way of thinking, as they allow the clause to remain unexpunged from the statute-book, and deny the benefits of bills of exchange as proofs of debts and negotiable instruments, to all transactions under five pounds.

The next thing that troubles me is a lingering remnant of feudality. The haughty baron of the nineteenth century does not despoil

his humble retainer, the tradesman, but he takes credit, which is nearly the same thing. If the haughty baron is a member of the royal household, the feudal element is increased. The haughty baron rides rough-shod over all human feelings, and wears out patience of the most endurable kind. The haughty baron keeps me at bay to the very verge of the Statute of Limitations, and, in self-defence, I am obliged to have recourse to the law. The law informs me that I can do nothing without the written sanction of the lord steward of her Majesty's household. I go to Buckingham Palace, and after the usual delay and trouble, I obtain an interview with an under-secretary, who tells me that my application for permission to sue must be made in writing, accompanied with full particulars of my claim; and he kindly advises me to make it upon folio foolscap, with a margin. I send in my claim upon the haughty baron in the required form, and in a few days I receive a reply from the lord steward, stating that if the money be not paid within a certain liberal specified time from the date of the lord steward's communication, I have the lord steward's permission to take legal proceedings against the haughty baron. It is amusing to find a royal palace converted into a sanctuary for haughty but insolvent barons. It is possible that if the rude emissary of the law was allowed free entrance to the sacred precincts of the household, the royal banquet in the evening would be graced with at least one gold stick in waiting less than the royal eyes had whilome been accustomed to look upon.

I believe that the best authorities on government hold that taxes are paid for protection to person and property. I will admit that my person is fairly protected; but if my heroic statesmen can spare a little time from those brilliant employments of ornamental government —Indian annexations, colonial extensions, military campaigns, diplomatic subtleties, and foreign legations—for the more homely task of protecting my property, by looking into the relations of debtor and creditor, the successor of the late John Smirker, the next time the collector calls, will pay his taxes with a more cheerful countenance.

GOOD-WILL.

I LIVE in a free country; I cannot be pressed into the Queen's service; I cannot be kept in prison more than twenty-four hours without a preliminary trial; I am not the born thrall of any Cedric the Saxon; I cannot be sold into slavery. Rule Britannia, Magna Charta, Habeas Corpus, and the Bill of Rights!

So much for my public liberty; but how about my private freedom of action?

Between me and my country, the balance is pretty fairly struck. I pay my taxes, and I enjoy my privileges; but between me and a certain class of my fellow-creatures, called my neighbours, there is a long account to settle, in which I stand, not as a debtor, but as a creditor. While I sit ruminating in the learned seclusion of my study, while I sit masticating in the social communion of my dining-room, while I lounge in the elegant luxuriance of my drawing-room, or slumber in the comfortable silence of my bed-chamber, I am bought and sold; my wants, my fancies, my ailings, and weaknesses, are weighed, and measured, and hawked about the town to find a purchaser. I am not even the miserable shadow of a free agent. I live under Bow Bells, in a neighbourhood that is like a little village within the City. I am parcelled out amongst a baker, a tailor, a bootmaker, a butcher, a publican, a doctor, a green-grocer, a fishmonger, and a sweep. If there were but two of each, I would not complain, as that would secure me something like competition; but my street with its ramifications, notwithstanding the adjacent markets, is given up to the tender mercies of these small individual monopolists, and I am bound hand and foot with it. I see an 'eligible business in this street with good-will,' etc., advertised in the columns of the leading organ, and I feel a cold chill run through my frame, as if I was a South Carolina slave reading an account of his good qualities in a local newspaper: I am part of that good-will, myself and my family. Our capacity for consuming food is calculated to a loaf, a herring, a mutton-chop, a pint of beer, a cabbage, even to a single

potato. My requirements in the way of garments, made or repaired, are put upon paper, and made the bases of a selfish calculation. My sweep looks upon my chimneys as his property, not mine, and gets sullen and discontented if he is not called in with periodical regularity. On one occasion, when a stupid cook tilted a pan of dripping on the fire, and set the whole flue in a blaze, this black and heartless scoundrel was heard to observe, 'that it was a great pity, but it made good for trade.' I am not sure that the chance of such a casualty happening, say once a-year, does not enter into his calculations for obtaining a livelihood.

The doctor, who, as a man of some education and refinement, ought to be free from such mercenary feelings, is, I am confident, even worse than the others. When I go out every morning to my business, looking a trifle paler than usual, this speculator upon human infirmities is glaring at me through the coloured bottles, weighing my symptoms, and gloating over the prospect of a patient. Although I do not hear him, I feel that he says to himself, in that horrid back-parlour, amongst the instruments, the grinning teeth, and the sickening smell of camphor: 'When will those rude, healthy children at Number Twelve have the measles, like other children?'

Yes, I am known as Number Twelve. I do not require a name; but like a Siberian convict, I am distinguished by a numeral. I have no domestic privacy, in one sense, for a dozen eager eyes are always turned upon me and my household. The bootmaker knows how many pairs of boots I have; he sees them ranged in a row in my dressing-room, as plainly as if he was amongst them, and he waits and watches for the decay which, he knows, must come to boots as to everything else. If I order more than I want, I am 'liberal—a patron of trade—a real gentleman—a man who likes to live and let live.' If I exercise a careful economy, and wear them thoroughly and fairly, I am 'an old hunks, mean, close, and shabby genteel.' If I do not choose to have fish for dinner, the fishmonger is aware of the fact, without knowing the cause, and he and his wife settle, that we are not so well off as we appear to be. If our consumption of meat falls off from any cause, I know the butcher thinks that we are pinching our domestics. The plumber and house-decorator wonder, 'how much longer we are going to leave our front in its present disgraceful condition. If our regard for health does not impel us to re-paint and paper the interior of our castle, we might at least consult the harmonious elegance of the neighbourhood, and adorn the exterior.' The tailor looks with ill-con-

cealed disgust upon a certain great-coat, that I believe I have now worn for three seasons. His artistic eye may see in it an antiquated style, a threadbare face, and a generally diminished lustre; but, to my untrained gaze, it looks very little the worse for the long, but not severe struggle it has gone through. My grocer, I know, complains that we do not have puddings enough in the course of the year, and that our consumption of tea bears no adequate proportion to our consumption of sugar; while our cheesemonger thinks we are remarkably niggardly in the way of eggs, and absurdly liberal in the matter of lard.

So is every detail of our domestic expenditure registered, examined, compared, and criticized. Our house, to the passer-by, looks solid, opaque, detached, snug, and private, but to this little band of hungry traders it is as a glass pavilion, easy of access, under the thin transparent covering of which the movements of the small family-circle within are distinctly visible.

Nor is this knowledge (so interesting to them, but so embarrassing to me) confined within their own bosoms. Our neighbourhood advertises one of its eligible businesses for sale nearly every week, and the immense value of the 'good-will' is more than sufficiently dwelt upon. I am trotted out before the vulgar, inquiring eyes of all that motley tribe of small capitalists who are ever looking for a profitable investment. I watch the little groups as they arrive one after the other; and I fancy that I know them all. There is the couple of middle-aged spinster sisters, who having received a small legacy, are searching for a genteel business, combining the lending library and the fancy trade—a mixture of literature and Berlin wool. They make several visits before they get to that decisive stage when the man of affairs is called in to confer upon the valuation. There is the stout, well-fed gentleman's servant, who wishes to exchange the elegancies of May Fair for the sanded tap-room; and, with the assistance of the brewer, make an effort to manage the thriving public-house at the corner. There is the young couple, just married, or going to be married, who make inquiry about the returns and prospects of the bread and fancy biscuit establishment. There is the mother who brings her son, a fat blood-thirsty boy, to inquire about the butcher's business which he has taken a strong fancy to. There is the omnibus conductor, who wishes to take the greengrocer's shop for his wife to manage, while he attends to it in the intervals of his journeys from Paddington to the Bank. I know that the two

spinster sisters inquire about me, and are told to what extent I patronize literature and the domestic fine arts. I know that the gentleman's servant is duly informed of the consumption of my family in intoxicating liquors; and what I consider shameful dissipation on their part, he looks upon as showing a disregard for the interests of my neighbours, and a disinclination to 'do another a turn.' I feel that the young couple are deluded with grossly exaggerated accounts of the quantity of bread and flour consumed by 'Number Twelve;' and I almost feel disposed to stop the negotiations by a disclosure. I see the mother and the blood-thirsty son in the butcher's shop, looking towards me with unmistakable interest as I pass by, while they are pursuing their investigations. I see them again, the next day, looking over the book in which my name, or rather my number, stands registered; and in the evening, in the little greasy room behind the shop, where the transfer is about to be formally concluded, I know that I form a prominent topic of discussion when the question of 'good-will' comes to be decided upon.

Sometimes I fancy the interests of the little knot of traders clash; the fishmonger becomes jealous of the butcher, or the butcher of the fishmonger; the tailor thinks that I patronize the bootmaker more than I do him, or the bootmaker becomes discontented when he sees me with a new coat. The doctor grumbles that there is not enough stale fish and doubtful meat sold, to enable him to keep his family in a respectable manner; and since they erected the gymnasium at the school at Islington for the boys, the demand for pills and black-draughts has sensibly fallen off. Although there is now an occasional dislocation, or a broken leg, it does not benefit him, as he has no surgical knowledge.

If I dare to rebel against the right of property which these traders claim in me and my household, I am very soon brought to a proper sense of the duties of my position. When I forbade the grocer the house for a few days, in consequence of the unbearable character of the articles he sold; he waited upon me in the most confident manner, and coolly said, 'that he would endeavour, if possible, to do better in future; but begged respectfully and firmly to state that he had paid about thirty pounds for me in the good-will, and he certainly intended to have me!'

And so it is with them all. I may be weak, imaginative, and morbidly sensitive, but I am morally certain that the very undertaker is looking towards me with longing eyes, waiting for the time, per-

haps not far distant, when I shall slip through the greedy fingers of his fellow-tradesmen, and drop helplessly into his willing arms. I am sure that at the little evening gatherings in the tavern parlour, feeling that his chances of employment come few and far between, and utterly forgetful of the peculiar nature of his calling, he is one of the first to join in the universally popular tradesman's maxim of 'live and let live.' When the curtains are drawn close and the knocker is muffled, I know that his card will be dropped gently into my letter-box to remind me of his claims and his existence.

CONVICT CAPITALISTS.

MR SMILES'S Self-Help is a volume that has been extensively sold and adopted as an educational text-book by certain American colleges. Its success has been well deserved. The world can never hear too much in praise of application and perseverance, energy and courage, industry and ingenuity, self-culture and the dignity of work. As the taste of a nation is purified by looking upon the best models of art, so the character of a nation must be strengthened by looking upon the best models of living men.

The task which Mr Smiles has performed for virtue, ought certainly to be performed for vice. The rising generation gains nothing by being admitted to view human nature only on its brightest side. Without going the length of saying that whatever is, is right, I assert that whatever has been, is worthy of a record.

Criminals, of nearly all kinds, are great practical demonstrators. The burglar shows us, by experiment, the weakest point in our dwelling; the fraudulent bankrupt has a use in pointing out the traps and pitfalls of trade; the forging bank-clerk directs the attention of men to the blindness of business professors, and the inutility of so-called business checks. It is not enough, for the purposes of perfect education, that the career of such great teachers should only be stamped upon the ephemeral pages of the daily and weekly press; the modern Plutarch should seize them, as they rise to the surface, and

hand them down for imperishable infamy and fame. The compilations of this character that have been already attempted, are too wanting in simplicity, too overloaded with technical details, to stand as the model histories of 'men who have helped themselves.' We want something more concise, more biographical, and less apologetic —a Newgate Calendar, in fact, for the use of schools. If, in addition to teaching wisdom and caution to ignorant holders of property, it should teach crime to a few budding criminals, it would work out a beneficial mission, notwithstanding.

It seems to be a law of social nature that crimes shall reach a certain point of enormity, or excellence, before they are put down by the aroused energies of their victims, or retire upon the laurels of satisfied ambition. There was a time when burglary, both with and without violence, was the nightly phantom that haunted the pillows of all who had anything to lose. It reached its climax in certain murders committed some twenty years ago, since which period it has gradually declined, until it may now be considered almost a lost art.

The leading delinquency of the present day, is the robbery of joint-stock companies by confidential servants. From Walter Watts to William George Pullinger, it shows every sign of a vigorous and progressive youth. It may have been cast a little in the shade by the frauds of certain merchants, private bankers, and bank directors; by such leviathan 'self-helpers' as Strahan and Paul, as Davidson and Gordon, as J. Windle Cole, John Sadleir, Hugh Cameron, and Humphrey Brown, of the Royal British Bank; as Colonel Waugh, and certain directors of the Liverpool Borough Bank, the Western Bank of Scotland, and the Northumberland and Durham District Bank (amongst whom there are upwards of two millions of sterling money to be accounted for); it may have been cast a little in the shade by such colossal monuments of fraud, but, for all that, it is well able to hold its own. The relations of master and servant impose many difficulties in the way of ambitious forgers. Such men as Walter Watts, as William James Robson, as Leopold Redpath, and William George Pullinger, are the purest examples of 'men who have helped themselves.' They started from very humble positions—were born with no directorial silver spoons in their mouths—were quick to discover the weakest point of the trading system in which they were placed—and, with one exception, almost ended by becoming convict millionnaires.

Walter Watts, who stands first in the history of this class of

modern fraud, was a humble check-clerk in the office of the Globe Insurance Company, at a salary of two hundred pounds a year. He was the son of a former honourable but subordinate clerk in the same establishment, and he entered upon his duties some time about 1844. When his frauds were discovered in 1850, he had succeeded in abstracting about seventy thousand pounds.

He seems early to have discovered who were in reality the City 'men of straw.' They were not the 'stags' of Capel Court, the professional bill-acceptors, or the presentable directors who gained a precarious livelihood by lending their titled names to boards of management and prospectuses; but those singularly deceptive beings, those wooden guardians of property—those Gogs and Magogs of trading guilds and associations—the appointed auditors. He seems early to have analyzed one of these highly curious productions of the mercantile world, and to have arrived at an exact estimate of its value. He found it to be composed of a little fussiness, a great deal of carelessness and trusting simplicity, a small portion of hurried and divided attention—the real business and chief interest lying in another direction—the usual amount of cloth and linen that goes to the furnishing of a responsible-looking City merchant, and a pair of pinch-nose spectacles of faultless magnifying power. He observed that this half-human, half-mechanical being had a settled aversion to move off its chair, and seldom asked to be allowed to examine any books or documents that were not voluntarily placed before it. He observed that it had an almost superstitious reverence for figures, if they appeared to balance each other, and showed no marks of erasure; and that so long as these emblems or signs of things were provided in liberal quantities, it never cared to inquire whether the things themselves had any substantial existence. He found that the more entangled these figures, emblems, or signs, were made, the quicker did the auditor glide through his duty; and he inferred from this that human nature was asserting its influence, and that auditors, like other beings, unwilling to confess their ignorance, were only too happy to pass rapidly over complications that they could not understand. He observed that in those rare cases where a personal survey of property was added to an empty audit of figures, the property was never 'over the way,' or 'round the corner,' but situated in a distant part of the country, where it gave an excuse for a pleasant summer journey, and several days' festivity at leading hotels: of course at the expense of the audited company.

This being the result of Walter Watts's analysis of auditors, it can hardly be wondered at, that he gained courage to 'help himself.' He took thousands after thousands, through the medium of false entries and fictitious claims; he became the proprietor of two theatres, and lived an intensely gay life during the hours that remained to him before ten o'clock in the morning, and after four o'clock in the afternoon; his office banking pass-book and his fire and life loss-book presented a mass of erasures and alterations, but still he met with no check or hindrance from the auditing men of straw. Nor was it through their periodical vigilance that his frauds were, at last, discovered, and that he was driven, through a verdict of ten years' transportation, to hang himself in his cell.

The fate of Walter Watts, in 1850, was powerless, so it seems, to deter others from following in his footsteps, and benefiting by the discoveries which his keenness and industry had made. The loss of seventy thousand pounds sterling by the Globe Insurance Company was also powerless, so it seems, to improve the character of auditors, and elevate them into something less practically worthless than men of straw.

The next fraudulent servant who 'helped himself' to any great extent, was William James Robson, the forger of Crystal Palace shares. His operations began in 1853—within three years of the death of Walter Watts—and ended in 1856. His private life was very similar to that of the master he copied, although he only succeeded in appropriating about thirty thousand pounds. This was done by taking advantage of his position in the transfer-office of the Crystal Palace Company, to create shares and sell them in the market, relying upon the apathy of the purchasers—a class from whom auditors are drawn. His calculations—or rather Walter Watts's calculations—were perfectly sound, and for two years and more these strips of paper were frequently bought and sold, without any purchaser having the prudence to walk from the Stock Exchange to the transfer-office on the City side of London Bridge, where he might easily have discovered the fraud. The amount that Robson secured was small compared with Watts's abstractions, but it was large when allowance is made for the inferior materials with which he had to work. If his lot had fallen upon happier ground—upon the banking balances of rich and thriving corporations—he might have eclipsed his predecessor in the loftiness and daring of his flight. As it was, he might have said, in imitation of Jean Paul Richter, 'I have made

the most of the stuff that was given me: no man can do more.' He was transported for twenty years.

Some time before William James Robson rose and fell, and very shortly after the death of Walter Watts, a greater man than either in this peculiar aristocracy of fraud, must have been already laying his plans. Leopold Redpath, a clerk in the share-office of the Great Northern Railway, had also learnt the empty character of auditors and the hollowness of so-called business checks. In 1851 or 1852 he must have begun to issue forged shares. From that period until 1856, his career was one of clerkly exactitude and fraudulent success; his life was one of mingled luxury and philanthropy; and when he was arrested, to be afterwards transported for life, he had obtained from the sale of his forged shares, about two hundred and forty thousand pounds. His trial took place on the 15th of January, 1857, hardly five months after the following auditorial certificate of the company's business regularity had been issued to the confiding shareholders :—

'Accountant's Department, Aug. 7, 1856.

"To the Chairman and Directors of the Great Northern Railway Company.

'Gentlemen,—The accounts and books in every department continue to be so satisfactorily kept, that we have simply to express our entire approval of them, and to present them to you for the information of the shareholders, with our usual certificate of correctness.

'We have the honour, etc.,

(Signed) 'John Chapman, 'J. Cattley, } Auditors.'

At this period, Leopold Redpath must have received the bulk of his enormous prize.

The notoriety of this case, the extent of fraud it disclosed, and the complete verification it presented of Walter Watts's secret analysis of auditors, were generally considered sufficient to check all further development of this class of crime. The world was disposed to look upon Leopold Redpath as one who had reached the top of the criminal tree; as the most eminent among all modern men of this kind who had 'helped themselves.' It was widely understood that all joint-stock enterprises had undergone a searching examination and cleaning out; that insurance offices, railways, and especially banks, were secured, for ever, from any fraudulent worms in the bud, and were now to be happy in having auditors who were something more than men of straw. Failures might come (as come they did), and the country might pass through the financial agony of a commercial crisis

(as it did at the close of 1857), but it was felt that forging servants of joint-stock companies had had their day, and that, after all, the wisdom taught us by their dishonesty was not so dearly bought.

How little this sense of security was based upon actual knowledge, was soon shown by William George Pullinger, the last * and greatest follower of Walter Watts. This late chief cashier of the Union Bank of London pleaded guilty to a charge of having stolen two hundred and sixty-three thousand and seventy pounds, eight shillings and tenpence, by means of a false pass-book, and tampering with a Bank of England account. He entered the bank, as an ordinary clerk, in 1839, and he became chief cashier about 1855. Five years after Walter Watts committed suicide, one year before Robson was discovered and transported, two years before a similar punishment was awarded to Redpath, this fraudulent bank-servant must have begun to abstract the bank funds. On the very day when the trial of the latter criminal was taking place, and possibly on the day after, when his own auditors may have been rubbing their hands and congratulating themselves upon the anti-fraudulent armour of the Union Bank, this William George Pullinger may have been speculating on the turf, or the Stock Exchange, and keeping money back from his employers' store at the Bank of England, in order to gamble like a capitalist, or a sporting lord. As evening came, and he locked his desk, and put on his hat, and closed the door of the banking-house upon his humbler fellow-clerks, he must have laughed when he considered how they were settling down for hours under the shaded lamps, to trace an obstinate error of a few pounds or a few shillings in the 'general balance,' while he was tripping off with a quarter of a million of money that was supposed to be safely lodged in the national bullion temple over the way. He had little fear that any discovery would be made before the allotted termination of five years; for Walter Watts's calculations—proved as they had been by Robson and Redpath—were to be trusted like the axioms of an exact science. He knew that certain inferior stealers of gold had substituted shot in its place; and that other ruder criminals had piled up stones and brick-bats to conceal the loss of property. He had studied in a higher school, and he knew the value of figures. He relied upon a judicious combination of Arabic numerals, and his confidence was not misplaced. The appointed auditors—the Gog and Magog of the bank—were rather an assistance to him than otherwise.

* Since this was written the Commercial Bank of London has been destroyed by a ledger-clerk named Durdan, who has defrauded it of nearly £70,000. February, 1861.

They looked so like a pair of terrible guardians of property, that people most contentedly accepted the show for the reality. So William George Pullinger stood for years within their shadow, and 'helped himself' freely to everything around him; and when he was discovered—as usual, not by auditorial sagacity—he had distanced Walter Watts by nearly two hundred thousand pounds, and the great Redpath by nearly thirty thousand.

Many believe (so most of us here said) that the Pullinger frauds will end this forging series. We shall see. Commercial houses will be hurriedly put in order for a few weeks, and auditors will join hands and swear solemnly that such things shall never occur again. We shall see.

A joint-stock bank, as most persons are aware, is a trading corporation started for money-lending and money-borrowing purposes, with a small paid-up, and a large promised capital. This paid-up capital may be a million of money, and a million we will take it to be, for the sake of example. In the course of a few years, if money be plentiful, and the bank be reputed to be prosperous, 'customers' balances' remain, and 'deposits' flow in, until from six to ten millions of *borrowed capital* is added to the *paid-up capital*. With the whole of this sum the bank is at perfect liberty to trade, reserving a certain portion by way of 'balance'—in some cases a fifth, in others an eighth—according to the rules of business experience, and the laws of banking. In the mean time, the shares, which represent the original paid-up capital of one million sterling, are always to be bought in the open market at a certain varying premium. If the future Pullinger can help himself to a certain proportion of the available resources of the bank (about a fifth will generally suffice)—and there is nothing in the past or present system of auditing to prevent him—it will be easily seen that he can buy up all the shares of his employers, until he stands the sole proprietor of the establishment, secure from any civil or criminal prosecution. The bank will be his, the clerks will be his, the books and documents will be his; and, as many people prefer dealing with a private banker, he may experience but a very slight 'run' upon his six or ten millions of 'deposits.'

VERY SINGULAR THINGS IN THE CITY.

IT is a singular thing that all the working engineers and stout-armed 'navigators' who planned, and dug-out, and built up the Great Northern Railway, were compelled, before they commenced their labours, to wait for the oath of one man, who happened to be William James Robson, the future forger. The 'compulsory powers' of a railway Act cannot be put in force, and the 'first sod' of a railway cannot be turned, until oath has been made before a magistrate that a certain amount of 'capital' has been subscribed. The man who cast up the sums contained in the 'deed of subscription,' and who certified that the requisite amount was secured, was William James Robson, a lawyer's clerk, who was afterwards in the Crystal Palace share-office in the City of London.

It is a very singular thing that a railway set in motion, so to speak, by such a man, and falling, as early as 1848, into the hands of an ambitious costermonger, named Leopold Redpath, was not robbed to a much greater extent than nearly a quarter of a million sterling. It is a singular thing that a Board of Directors should have engaged this man without knowing that he once hawked fish and poultry about the streets of Folkestone, Kent; that he was successively a lawyer's clerk, a shipping clerk, and a bankrupt 'insurance-broker,' paying half-a-crown in the pound. It is a singular thing that these directors should have placed this man in an office where the secretary's signature was kept in the form of a stamp, which stamp was in a wooden book-case, accessible to any clerk, at any hour of the day, for the purpose of signing 'stock certificates.' It is a singular thing, in an undertaking representing some five millions of capital, that 'stock certificates' duly signed, but bought in, under the operation of sales on the Stock Exchange, to be cancelled, were put away uncancelled in an ordinary cupboard, open to every one employed in the 'registrar's office.' It is a singular thing that when large irregularities on the part of Mr Registrar Redpath were discovered two years and a-half before his directors had the courage to arrest him for fraud, he was allowed to

pay back certain sums of money, by which he stopped inquiry. It is a singular thing that if his career had been cut short at this point, at Midsummer, 1854, and had not been suffered to extend to Christmas, 1856, the shareholders would have saved about seventy thousand pounds in shares and dividends. Instead of this, he was allowed to take a lofty tone about his means and position 'as a gentleman,' and some of his directors and fellow-labourers were afraid of losing so valuable and important a servant! It is a still more singular thing that if an inquiry had been at once instituted in 1852, when the first warning of 'payments in excess of dividends' should have been noticed and acted upon, the delinquent would have stolen only about seventy thousand pounds, instead of two hundred and forty thousand.

It is a singular thing that the chief auditor chosen for the accounts of this vast and complicated enterprise, should have been a highly respectable merchant, no doubt, but one who had been so unsuccessful in 'auditing' his own business transactions, that in the course of eleven years he had been robbed by a clerk of thirty thousand pounds. It is a singular feature in the life of this auditor, that he *never saw Redpath in his life*. Redpath was about the office, to some purpose, for nearly ten years; but the leading auditor never saw him, to his knowledge, on any occasion.

It is a singular thing that this same auditor was a Director of the Union Bank of London; and that Mr Leopold Redpath kept his banking account at this bank. It is not to be presumed that an auditor of a railway, who never saw its chief registrar, and that registrar so remarkable a man, should, in his capacity of a bank director, know much about the nature, amount, and character of the different bank accounts. An auditor who led the way in signing that extraordinary document, wherein it was stated that the 'accounts and books in every department' of the Great Northern Railway, were 'correct and most satisfactorily kept,' about five months before the great forger was brought to justice, could hardly be expected to pry much into bank ledgers, or to gather much information if he did pry. Perhaps he relied too much upon the 'Governor' of the Union Bank, Sir Peter Laurie, and upon this worthy magistrate's world-famous reputation for 'putting' everything like an irregularity 'down.' An account, such as Redpath must have kept at the Union Bank, must have been highly 'irregular,' and must have shown suspicious 'irregularities,' for a railway servant, to say nothing of an ex-fish and poultry hawker, and a bankrupt insurance-broker.

It is a singular thing that in this large and flourishing joint-stock bank, with its many branches, was William George Pullinger, the chief of modern forgers. He has been hurried off the scene in a very summary way, and is beyond the reach of cross-examination; but it requires little knowledge of his transactions to opine that *he* was not ignorant of Leopold Redpath's operations. He could not copy the ex-fish and poultry hawker, by manufacturing shares, but he could extract even more gold from his employers' pockets with a simple 'pass-book.' A 'pass-book' costs only a few shillings at any City stationer's, or less than the price of a coarse and vulgar crowbar. The little profit that the Union Bank of London secured by harbouring the banking account of 'Leopold Redpath, Esq.,' the bankrupt insurance-broker, was more than counterbalanced, in all probability, by the bad example it placed before the bank clerks. It is evident that William George Pullinger was not improved by coming into contact with a banking account like Redpath's; and it is evident that the Union Bank of London was not improved by the demoralization of William George Pullinger. One of the statements to be submitted to the suffering shareholders, at the next half-yearly meeting in July,* should run thus:—

SPECIAL PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT (No. 1),

Showing gain by a Fraudulent Customer, and loss by a Fraudulent Clerk.

Dr. *Cr.*

	£	*s.*	*d.*		£	*s.*	*d.*
To gain on Redpath's Account (Fraudulent Customer), *Estimated* . .	300			By loss on Pullinger (Fraudulent Clerk)—			
				Principal	263,000		
Balance loss	292,700			Interest about	30,000		
	293,000	—	—		293,000	—	—
				Loss. Balance down	292,700		

It is a singular thing that the estimated item of thirty thousand pounds for 'interest' has not yet appeared in any directorial statement of the amount of Pullinger's frauds. The capital so fully employed by Pullinger might have been profitably employed by the bank, for it is evident that as they never missed it, when it was stolen, it must have been an idle and unnecessary 'balance.' There is an evil sometimes, it would seem, in being excessively prosperous.

* July, 1860.

It is a very singular thing that shareholders, in the face of such warnings as these, should still cling to an empty, because a low-priced, system of audit. Whenever their affairs are purposely entangled by men like Leopold Redpath, and they have to call in professional accountants, and resort to an 'independent investigation,' they then learn that real auditing is a necessary part of a business organization, and that it becomes all the more costly the more it has been neglected. The damage done to a large enterprise by half-shareholder, half-honorary, five, ten, fifteen, and twenty-pounds-charging auditors is seldom ever explained, and *never repaired* by five, ten, fifteen, and twenty-thousand-pounds-charging accountants. The frauds of Redpath, if taken at five per cent. upon the amount, will represent an income *for ever* of twelve thousand pounds per annum. The frauds of Pullinger, if treated in the same way, will represent a perpetual annual income of fourteen thousand and five hundred pounds.

The first sum would surely pay for the continuous and only effective audit of many British railways—perhaps of all; and the second sum would probably do the same for all the joint-stock banks. It is a singular thing that shareholders, at present, are blind to this, and are satisfied with a few respectable, fully-occupied, middle-aged gentlemen 'auditors,' who manage to 'run in' to glance at the books and vouchers about twelve times, or less, in the course of the year. It is a singular thing that these shareholders look to future economy and future profit, to cover these heavy and periodical losses by fraud; forgetting that the future money saved or made is not the money that was lost, and that the same economy and industry might have been practised without the unhealthy spurring on of gigantic forgers and thieves.

On the other hand, it is an equally singular thing that men of position, of means, and reputation, can be found to fill the chairs of amateur auditorship, for dinners, small patronage, and trifling fees. A new piano for Miss 'Auditor,' a new dress for Mrs 'Auditor,' a family trip to Germany, or Italy, a few banquets at town and suburban taverns, may be very agreeable things in their way, if they be not purchased at too great a cost. A few 'attendances,' a few 'signatures' may not appear much to give for such luxuries, if the *responsibility* incurred is carefully forgotten. The capital invested in British railways alone is estimated at *four hundred millions sterling*. It is nearly all 'audited' by these daring amateurs.

THE POOR MAN'S MONEY-LENDER.

THE pawnbroker is necessarily the poor man's money-lender, regard him as we may, and, if he charged a fair and moderate rate of interest, he might often be of great service to his customer. Where, as in many instances, his business is conducted according to the provisions of the Act of Parliament, and proper caution is exercised by him in the reception of property—no one has any right to blame the individual, although the system is open to censure. Where, however, as is too often the case, the pawnbroker exacts far more than the legal rate of interest —where the few provisions of the Acts of Parliament—which are much more in his favour than in that of the depositor—are constantly and systematically evaded, these abuses press very heavily on the poor. It is a notorious fact, that in all the poorer and more degraded neighbourhoods, the pawnshops and marine-store dealers abound most and flourish.

Pawnbroking in England is in private hands, but in France it is in the hands of the State, who derive a revenue from it, which is used for charitable purposes, and protect the poor from the impositions, heavy rates of interest, and sacrifices of property, which they constantly have to endure here. The careful and precise manner in which the managers of the *Mont de Piété* act before they grant a loan, effectually prevents that institution from becoming what the pawnbrokers and marine-store dealers too often are in this country—encouragers of thieves, and receivers of stolen goods. The French thief knows his business too well to confide his spoil to the care of the *Mont de Piété*. The French law throws its protecting shield over the property of the subject by rendering the disposal or pledging of stolen goods difficult; whilst in this country it is too often the direct interest of the pawnbroker to shelter crime from detection, as much as possible, in order not to have to give up booty to its rightful owners. Perhaps it is not too much to say that if there were no pawnbrokers, dolly-shop keepers, or marine-store dealers, or, if they were under a more strict and genuine supervision, there would be an immense diminution of theft in England.

The *Mont de Piété* receives no pledges from any pawner who cannot bring distinct proof of his identity. In most cases the managers insist upon seeing the receipt for rent, which often enables them to stop a tenant in furnished lodgings from pawning his landlord's property. Many articles are pledged by agents, who are responsible for all representations made on behalf of their employers. The French laws for preventing the sale of stolen property are very severe. The French dealers in gold, precious stones, and other valuable articles, are bound not to pay for the purchase of such property anywhere but in the houses of the sellers, after making due inquiry of the neighbours and the house-porters.

The pawnbroker in England does not confine his attention only to money-lending. In poor neighbourhoods he keeps a shop where unredeemed property appears to lie for sale, but which is, in fact, a warehouse for delusive bargains. This shop is a store-house for articles of the commonest description — Birmingham guns, pistols, tools of defective metal or finish, jewels of bad quality, imitation gold, and generally all kinds of manufacturing failures and deceptions. The pawnbroker, owing to his reputation for getting things at less than half their value, can always obtain a better price for such articles than the ordinary trader. In rich neighbourhoods, the pawnbrokers have other shops for the sale of spurious antiquities—cracked china, yellow Carrara statuary, and dusky oil pictures. Not long ago a man was taken before the magistrates for stealing a large bronze figure while it was acquiring the market signs of venerable old age. This figure —a modern cast of certain value—had been put down a sewer, that the foul gases might give it that mouldy 'patina' tint so much sought after by art-collectors; and afterwards it was exposed on the roof of a house to relieve it from an unpleasant odour. While it was taking the air in this position, it was carried off by the thief, whose examination only taught art-collectors another of those lessons which they never seem to profit by.

Many of the large pawnbrokers derive an income from deposited plate and jewels by lending them to persons for dinner-parties and balls. An assistant is often sent to watch the plate in the disguise of a head-waiter, and he generally lingers in the hall until her ladyship has done with the jewels. In some cases, the borrowers give full security for these loans, and then all such precautions are of course rendered unnecessary.

The substance of those parliamentary regulations under which pawnbrokers are supposed to conduct their business, may be stated in

a very few words. When the amount lent on any pledge exceeds forty shillings, and does not exceed ten pounds, the legal interest is fixed at the rate of fifteen per cent. per annum. On pledges below forty shillings, twenty per cent. per annum is payable, and these charges include all claims for warehouse-room. When the pledges are redeemed within six days beyond the expiration of a month, only one month's interest can be legally charged; when not more than thirteen days have elapsed, only one half-month's interest in addition to the month's can be demanded, and the second month's full interest can only be claimed when the term has exceeded the first month by fourteen days.

The pawnbroker is bound to keep books giving a description of goods pledged, the name and address of the pawner, and to give a ticket with full particulars, for which he receives a sum varying from one halfpenny to fourpence, according to the sum advanced. The pawnbroker is forbidden to buy or take in pledge unfinished goods, linen, or apparel, and when he breaks this rule he is liable to forfeit double the amount lent, and to restore the goods to the owners. He is allowed to sell unredeemed pledges by public auction at the expiration of twelve months, after advertising in some newspaper his name and address, the number of the pledge, and the month in which it was deposited. As a small check upon this power, the pawners are allowed to give notice to the pawnbrokers in writing not to sell the pledges for three months beyond the twelve.

The pawnbroker is ordered to keep an account in a book of all prices brought at such auctions by the unredeemed pledges, and to return any balance remaining after deducting the interest and expenses of sale. He is bound to allow the pawners to examine this account on payment of one penny. He is not allowed to purchase pledges that are in his custody, nor to take pledges from persons under twelve years of age or from intoxicated persons. He is also ordered to exhibit in a public part of his shop a list of the legal rates of interest, an account of what tickets and memoranda are to be delivered free of charge, and the expense of supplying a new ticket for a lost one.

From these provisions of the Act of Parliament, it will be seen, that the poor man's money-lender obtains fifteen and twenty per cent. interest, besides the amount paid for tickets, on loans for which he has a far better security than that often given for money advanced at five per cent. The pawnbroker fixes the amount he is willing to lend—

seldom more than one-third of the marketable value of the pledge tendered; and where the loan exceeds ten pounds it is advanced on what is called an agreement, written on stamped paper, which gives the pawnbroker the right of sale or of keeping the goods for the sum lent, and of extorting as much interest as his own greed and the necessities of his customer will allow. As loans of this character are not under the control of the Act of Parliament, the pawnbroker is not compelled to show his books, nor to give any information in case the goods have been dishonestly acquired. He can dispose of them in any way he may think fit, within the terms of his agreement, and he may also snap his fingers at the rightful owners. In most cases of fraudulent bankruptcy the above is the mode in which the property of the creditors is often disposed of. A case occurred some years ago in which a woman who had started as a jeweller, defrauded several manufacturers and diamond-merchants by pledging their goods, as soon as they were obtained, to one of these receivers. Every difficulty was thrown in the way of the creditors who wanted to get a sight of the property, only to ascertain whether it was worth redeeming. No pawnbroker can honestly pretend that he believes there is nothing wrong when a tradesman continually pawns his stock and never redeems it, or when goods are carried almost direct from the warehouse to the pawnshop without the 'private marks' of the wholesale dealer even being torn off. There are too many auctioneers and 'job-houses,' of apparent respectability, who deal largely in these dishonest 'bargains,' but the pawnbroker encourages such frauds far more than any other tradesman.

The legal rates of interest ranging from fifteen to twenty per cent. (in France the rate is fixed at twelve per cent. per annum, with one-half per cent. for valuation) are not always high enough to satisfy the poor man's money-lender. In far too many cases the pawnbroker will cheat his ignorant and needy customer with an arithmetical juggle. On a pledge of three shillings, for which the legal rate is three farthings a month, and for twelve months sevenpence-farthing, he will often exact ninepence, which he reckons in the following manner:—Interest on 3*s.*, $\frac{3}{4}d.$ per month, multiplied by 12, equal 9*d.*, which sounds correct, but if calculated properly would stand thus:—Interest on 3*s.* for twelve months at twenty per cent. per annum, $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ This nefarious practice, which is called 'taking the long interest,' although it enormously increases the pawnbroker's profits, may only rob the poor man of a trifle, but trifles are an object to that suffering

class who have to supply their pressing wants with the proceeds of three-shilling pledges. Two or three pence may only represent the value of a loaf of bread, but a loaf of bread may often represent a life snatched from the arms of death, and one disgraceful case of starvation less to be recorded by the Great Registrar-General.

There used to be a certain class of informers who kept the pawnbrokers to some degree in check, and though a vile and unreliable body, they were not altogether useless. The pawnbrokers, however, soon bribed these amateur detectives into silence with annual presents distributed at Christmas. The plan of these informers was to pledge articles and to redeem them at the end of the month and six days. The pawnbroker, having got into a habit of cheating, would mechanically charge the illegal two months' interest, thus putting himself into the hands of the informer, and being compelled to effect a compromise. At one period there was nearly a dozen of these informers, who each had a regular annuity of one or two guineas from three or four hundred London pawnbrokers, but now the magistrates have very properly discountenanced this spy-system, and it can scarcely be said to exist.

Many pawnbrokers, when an article has remained in pledge a few days beyond the twelvemonth, will take one penny per month (supposing the sum lent is three shillings), thus fining their poor and ignorant customers thirteen pence on the false ground that the article has been forfeited. When an application of this kind is made for an article, a more serious imposition is often practised. The article is privately examined, and if it promises to yield much more at a sale than the money lent upon it, with interest and overcharges, the pledger is told that it has been sold. As the pawnbroker rarely lends more than the third of its market-value on any pledge, the loss to the pawner by this imposition is very great. Many pawnbrokers adopt this plan of dealing when articles have been left only a day beyond the twelvemonth. Sometimes when the article pledged is an old family relic, one of those tokens of affection, the saddest of all pledges, which no money could replace, it is natural for the poor applicant to express much anxiety for the loss. This anxiety is too often observed and traded upon by the unscrupulous pawnbroker, who offers to try and re-purchase it from the imaginary buyer. If his offer is accepted, as it generally is with eagerness, he charges two or three times the money lent for his supposed trouble, and fresh pledges are often brought in to make up this payment.

Although the Act of Parliament forbids them to take more than a month's interest, supposing one month and six days to have elapsed since the pledge was deposited, yet in too many instances the full two months' interest is exacted, with extras. The interest-tables fixed in the shops are often placed where they cannot be easily read, and too many of the pawnbrokers' poorer customers are not accustomed to difficult reading.

Many pawnbrokers in poor neighbourhoods each deliver from fifteen hundred to two thousand pledges on a Saturday night—some even deliver them on a Sunday morning—and on these pledges the overcharges of interest reach a very considerable amount in the course of the year. Four to five pounds a week has been pilfered in one house in this way by the master and his assistants, the money being put into a box which was emptied late on Saturday night, and which was honestly called a 'Robbery Box.' Of course, it is needless to add that the assistants have a certain share of this plunder given them by their employer to encourage them in further sharp dealing.

Another very common and shameful fraud on the poor is the practice of exacting an extra sum for professing to take particular care of any article. If a new Sunday coat or a silk dress is brought to the pawnbroker this extra sum is demanded for putting it in a separate drawer. The money—twopence or threepence a week—is often readily paid for this supposed advantage, but the coat or dress is rarely better treated for the payment. All these exactions—though trifling, if taken separately—amount in the aggregate to a large sum. A man who pledges his coat, a woman who pledges her dress, every Monday, and takes it out again every Saturday night or Sunday morning—and pawners of this character may be numbered by thousands—will pay a frightful rate of interest in the course of the year, often far more than the amount of the loan. When money is lent upon furniture, a heavy rate is often charged for warehousing, contrary to the spirit of the Act of Parliament, and warehousing is often charged for a bed, a demand that is thoroughly illegal.

The regulation which orders the pawnbroker to take the name and address of the person pawning, and to give a ticket specifying all particulars, is constantly evaded. As a general rule, the pawnbroker merely asks the name of the pledger, and puts down any address that passes through his mind. When pressed upon this point, he says that he generally knows his customers too well to require such a register. The experiment has been recently tried of sending round a

perfect stranger to about twenty of the largest houses in the trade, and in no instance was the address asked for, nor any inquiry made. In one case the pawnbroker put down 'Fleet Street' without asking a question. None of these pawnbrokers could have known whether the goods tendered were stolen or not. The pledger went unknown and remained unknown; and the articles were taken in without the slightest questioning. It is true, that if they had been stolen, the pawnbrokers would have been compelled to give them up, and so it appears to be against their interest to take in stolen property; but it must be remembered that they only disgorge on conviction of the thief, and have therefore a strong motive to prevent detection as much as possible. Even if one case be discovered, there are probably fifty that go undiscovered, while by the system of agreements, before alluded to, the pawnbroker gets rid of all liability, except that incurred by ordinary purchasers of stolen property.

The numerous instances in which poor needlewomen have been punished for pawning goods entrusted to their care to make up, proves that the rule which forbids the pawnbroker to take in unfinished goods, linen, or apparel is constantly broken. Not long since, a clerk in a wholesale house was detected in robbing his employers of several pieces of silk and velvet, and he confessed that for five years he had been stealing and pledging these goods, and that he had rarely been asked any questions by the pawnbrokers. He invariably produced the goods from under his waistcoat, and he had habitually pledged them at five or six shops, tearing up the tickets. The merchants who had been defrauded wrote to all the pawnbrokers, giving a description of the goods, and offering to pay half the sum advanced, but they only got back a very small portion of their property.

The regulation framed to compel the pawnbroker to sell unredeemed pledges at the end of twelve months, if not requested in writing by the pawner to hold them for three months longer, and to hand over any surplus to the pledger, and to allow an inspection of accounts on the payment of a penny, is a rule that is broken in the most bare-faced manner. By the system of 'knock-outs' —much exposed lately—and other means, the pawnbroker often succeeds in defrauding his ignorant and helpless customers. The 'knock-out' system is an auction-room combination—a conspiracy doubtless in law—by which a sale by auction is reduced to an empty ceremony. The pawnbroker and his friends agree not to bid one against another, while one is instructed to buy for the rest. After a

few bids for the sake of appearances, the lot is knocked down to this bidder at a nominal price, unless there is much unusual competition in the room, and the second or real auction takes place later in the day at a tavern, where the pawnbroker and his disbanded confederates really bid against each other over the dinner-table. The difference between the price realized here and the price which the article fetched at the auction-room goes into a general fund, to be divided amongst the conspirators. Of course, the first, or auction-room price, is the one which is registered for the inspection of the pawner, should such inspection ever be demanded. If this price seems too high, it is immediately lowered, and entered in a duplicate book, which is kept entirely to show to inquirers. The auctioneers invariably refuse to give any information, and such frauds are therefore perpetrated with impunity. The poor pawner is robbed still further by being charged with a fancy commission on the sale, supposing he should ever come forward to claim his withered surplus. The pawnbroker pays five per cent. to the auctioneer for selling the goods, or rather for allowing his room to be used for a 'knock-out' combination, but the poor pawner is charged fifteen per cent. on the price realized at the auction-mart.

The numbers of children of tender years, and of staggering drunkards, who may be seen at certain hours on certain days coming out of the greasy side-entrances of pawnshops, are proofs how little the regulations of the Act forbidding the encouragement of such customers are regarded. The pawnbroker professes to know that the children are authorized by their parents to pledge; but the Act is very precise on this point, and much harm is done to the children by encouraging them.

The pawnbroker, with all his keenness, is occasionally deceived by swindlers. Not long ago a cask of wine was received as a valuable pledge, which turned out to be only water with a bladder of wine inserted in it. Beds have been taken in before now with children inside them, and parcels of gloves, only made for the right or left hand, have been pawned as pairs, and bought back by a confederate of the pawner for a mere trifle. The man who preys systematically upon the innocent pawnbroker by pledging articles made up for pawning and nothing else, is called a 'duffer,' and the term is often applied to the articles he pledges. As soon as a particular tool is superseded by a new invention, and consequently becomes almost worthless, the duffer will send it round to the pawnbrokers; and, by

the aid of male and female agents, will succeed in getting rid of a large quantity before the pawnbroker hears of the change in its value. Sometimes the duffer appears in a more distinguished shape; and we have heard of an aristocratic pledger who pawned and redeemed a really valuable jewel several times, until the pawnbroker's confidence was gained, and then tendered a spurious copy of the property, which was accepted, and never reclaimed.

When an unscrupulous pawnbroker has a few articles in his possession on which he has lent, by mistake, more money than they would fetch in a sale-room, he revenges himself on society in a peculiar manner. He ties these articles up in separate parcels, and pawns them to himself at fancy prices. The tickets made out for these goods are then entrusted to a duffer, who gets part of his living by selling pawntickets in public-houses. The duffer receives a large share of the money which he gets for these false tickets, and the unfortunate buyers, after going to the shop, paying the interest due, and looking at the pledges, of course decline to redeem them. They sell their tickets for what they can get, and other buyers go through the same unprofitable ceremony. By this plan, which breaks the rule forbidding him to buy pledges in his custody, the pawnbroker often gets three or four months' interest paid to him in a week, which more than counterbalances the losses he often sustains from duffers.

It may be gathered from the foregoing statements that most of the legislative rules intended to regulate pawnbroking are systematically evaded, and that the poorer classes pay most extravagant rates of interest for loans upon personal property. Half the impositions pointed out could often be plausibly explained away as clerical errors, even if poor men could afford the time and money to set up as prosecutors. The law may be impartial, but it certainly is not cheap, and prosecuting is a luxury only reserved for the rich.

The trade of pawnbroking, as at present carried on, reflects no credit either upon lender or borrower. The pawnbroker works under an evil reputation, and the pawner slinks to borrow money on good security, as if he was going to rob a till. If capitalists, seeking for safe investments, and philanthropists, trying to benefit the poor, were to turn their attention to model pawnbroking, they might found a *Mont de Piété*, without the intervention of the State, that would be a most beneficial institution in the squalid neighbourhoods of our large cities.

PENNY WISE AND POUND FOOLISH.

BUSINESS, whatever dreamy enthusiasts may say to the contrary, can never be honestly conducted on sentimental principles. The laws that govern it can no more be violated with any permanent benefit to the community, than the movements of the planets could be improved by man if that restless tinker had the power to reach them. What is given to one is always taken from some one else; and false humanity to a particular class can hardly be gratified without inhumanity to another. The designs of the outlaw often peep through the costume of the philanthropist. Certain romantic brigands proposed to give to the poor what they took from the rich: how many amiable smatterers in 'Social Science' propose to do anything a whit more honest? The evils produced by blind sentiment are even greater than those which can be traced to uninquiring ridicule. The breach—already too wide—between employers and employed, has been widened by the reckless labours of injudicious sentimentalists. The capitalists are abused for buying in the cheapest market—for sailing with a stream which they have no power to stem; the workmen are praised for making themselves as plentiful as blackberries, and yet demanding to be measured as strawberries. No one has ever gauged the mischief done by such poems as the 'Song of the Shirt.' The poet may have fattened upon them, but what about the object of his compassion? The poor sempstress, after sitting as a model to her artist in picturesque rags, is not even paid for her services in helping to compose the picture. Her other, and more conscientious employer, is not softened by the one-sided caricature of his motives and conduct, and it may be that he closes his shop, and sends his servant to the workhouse.

When charitable sentimentalists start trading societies, and test their theories by practice, they soon find that they cannot be more 'liberal' than their neighbours. If they give fancy wages, and, by any benevolent combination, are able to obtain fancy prices, the delu-

sion about a trading millennium may be fed for a time. As long as donations pour in on one side, and no dividend is demanded, and as long as well-wishers and supporters remain constant on the other, the little model organization may lead a pleasant existence, although the masters may be benefactors and the workpeople dependents. No blunt, outspeaking voice is there heard to tell the first how they are demoralizing the second, or to tell the second how they are receiving charity from the first. When, however, the philanthropic patrons die out, or become sick of the stationary character of their enterprise, the little socialistic community begins to wither, and while the masters hop joyfully to some other charitable hobby, the workpeople are thrown upon a pushing unfeeling world. The training they have received in such an artificial atmosphere has not braced them up for the real, exciting struggle of life, and they often sink helplessly by the wayside expecting every passer-by to help them.

Some sentimentalists, however, do not always break up their establishments in such admired disorder, for the reason that they may have been more fortunate in their plan and material. By the happy selection of a trading idea, and the instruments with which to carry it out, they may succeed in planting one self-supporting association in a desert of failures. When they meet with a success of this kind, it is instructive to watch the course of their trading. Those who have been ready to give soon show themselves quite as ready to take, and yet to claim credit for the purest philanthropy. With the first gleam of sunshine their protective spirit grows apace, and they call out loudly for something like a secured monopoly. They ask for special clauses to be smuggled into Acts of Parliament, and they are never afraid of having too much Government inspection. Like all monopolists at heart, their boasted charity, and even their truthfulness, leaves them when they speak of their opponents, and they profess to ask for no privilege except in the interest of the public.

This picture may include the general features of the sentimental trading class, and may put them in their most unfavourable light, but to show that I am not without warrant for my sketch, let me take one of the most prominent so-called benevolent societies—the Central Ragged School Shoeblack Society.

This association started in business on the 31st of March, 1851, and its progress has been steady, if not extraordinary. During a period of sixteen years, according to the committee's way of putting the case, it has been the means of providing employment for nearly eighteen

hundred boys from the Ragged Schools of London, who have collectively earned more than £25,000. All these boys—so says the report issued from the central office—have received temporary benefit from the occupation thus offered them, and a large number have been enabled permanently to improve their condition by obtaining respectable situations after leaving the Society. This number does not include those boys who have been employed by the other Shoeblack Societies* which have come into existence since 1851, in other districts of London. These are, for the most part, managed in the same manner as the Central Ragged School Shoeblack Society, and receive boys from schools in connection with the Ragged School Union.

The plan of working seems to be substantially as follows:—The boxes and uniform are deposited at the Society's office, where the boys assemble in the morning at seven o'clock. After prayers, they repair to their stations for the day, where they remain till the hour of return in the evening. This hour varies from four o'clock to six, according to the season of the year. The stations are arranged in four classes, two of which are within and two without the boundaries of the City; and the boys are placed in corresponding divisions, each boy occupying the stations in his own division in regular succession.

The charge for boot-cleaning is fixed at one penny. Each boy is required to deliver up the whole amount earned during the day, which is then applied in the following manner:—A little less than one half is paid to the boys in the shape of wages, and the other and greater half is divided into two nearly equal portions—one of which is paid into a bank to the credit of the boys, and is drawn upon to purchase them clothes and other necessaries, and the other portion is retained by the Society for the payment of office and expenses of management. The boys appear to earn individually about thirty pounds a year, and it therefore follows that they are deprived of the control of seven pounds and ten shillings a year, and have to pay another seven pounds and ten shillings a year as the cost of being regulated.

On the 31st of March, 1866, sixty-eight boys were in the Society, and since that time 130 have been admitted. Of these 198 boys, thirty-five have obtained situations, two have gone to sea, three have left from serious illness, eighty-seven have been discharged, or withdrawn, or have left of their own accord, and seventy-one remain at work in the Society.

The earnings of the boys in each year, and the shares paid to the

* Six Societies, 258 boys; earnings, 1866-67, £5434.

boys and to the Society, are shown in the following table (in which shillings and pence are omitted) :—

	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867
Average of Boys Employed	24	37	37	41	48	55	59	61	59	57	62	63	65	65	65	68
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Earnings.....	656	760	899	1193	1432	1735	1785	1746	1744	1639	1824	2017	1870	1941	1895	2067
Boys' Wages	372	450	491	614	724	857	887	893	872	833	921	994	945	954	936	1013
Boys' Banks	142	148	205	289	355	443	454	432	436	397	452	512	462	493	480	532
Retained by Society ...	141	161	203	288	352	434	443	421	435	400	450	511	462	493	479	521

These facts and figures, looked upon with no unfriendly eye, are far from satisfactory. They show that much work has been done—some part of it well, a great part of it ill—and that a great deal more has been checked or neglected. The blacking and polishing in the last year of more than a million pairs of boots is not a hundredth part of the work which is within the grasp of the shoeblacks. Even counting the 'opposition boys,' as they are called—the despised, abused, and hunted free-traders, who are now more numerous than the Society's boys—it is doubtful if one-fiftieth part of the demand for London street shoe-blacks is properly supplied. This deficiency must be largely caused by the penny wise and pound foolish policy of the shoe-black committee.

Whatever may be the charitable intentions of this governing body—whatever design they may originally have had to help the Ragged Schools and their pupils, they have not made the most of their opportunity. Like all sentimental traders, they start with a fallacy. They speak of themselves as 'the means of providing employment' for the boys, forgetting that the public are the real providers of work, and that the committee only act as very costly middlemen. By their own financial statement, they show that they impose an income-tax upon the working-boy of about five-and-twenty per cent., and deprive him of all control in the expenditure of an equal proportion of his earnings. Many of us grumble loudly enough about an income-tax imposed by Government of two and a half or three and three quarters per cent.; but what should we say if we had to pay

five shillings in the pound? During the sixteen years set forth in the last table, the Society have taken out of the boys' earnings about six thousand one hundred and ninety-four pounds, and have given the boys nothing in return but superintendence and a little schooling. With the hundreds of free day, night, and Sunday schools, all inviting the attendance of such scholars, the boys could have obtained the education for nothing; and we may therefore reckon that the five-and-twenty per cent. income-tax is exhausted in the expenses of superintendence. Many people who cast a passing glance at these liveried shoe-blacks in the streets, and who are too idle to inquire into the system on which they work, are under the impression that charity half-feeds them, half-clothes them; teaches them to read, write, and cast accounts; and provides them with decent lodgings. This is so far from being the case, that the balance-sheet of the Central Society shows how the boys pay superintendents' salaries, rent, rates, and taxes (the rates and taxes are deserving of special notice): and settle their own bills for coals, gas, furniture, printing, stationary, school-books, prizes, uniforms, boxes, brushes, mats, blacking, and the inevitable 'sundries.' A small sum—less than one per cent. upon the whole amount—is imported into the accounts in the shape of charity for an 'annual treat;' but this could at any time be paid back out of the standing balance, and the boys would then be able to hold up their heads like free solvent men. Why the sum was ever collected it is not very easy to see. The boys are worked by the committee in a sentimental, benevolent way, on much the same plan which the Saffron Hill capitalists adopt with the Italian organ-grinders and image-sellers. The difference between the two managers lies in this: the Italian boy goes out with his master's capital, and is only regarded as a talking, walking machine; the shoeblack pays his superintendent (who is not his master, although he calls himself such), works with his own capital, and is educated out of his compulsory savings.

The Shoeblack Society can hardly hope to make any great progress as a trading association, while it is conducted on its present plan. The boys, groping about amongst figures in a half-blind way, and putting down this and that with a piece of chalk, in rude signs, on the pavement, soon convince themselves that something is wrong. That they act upon such conviction is shown by the fact, before stated, that nearly half the boys were discharged or withdrew from the Society in the course of last year. They threw their livery off, and joined the ranks of the 'opposition boys,' who, after a long struggle, have suc-

ceeded in obtaining the fitful tolerance of the police. Nothing has been more tyrannical than the treatment of these ragged competitors by the police authorities for several years past, and nothing has been more disgraceful than the attempts on the part of the united societies to obtain a practical monopoly in this particular labour market.

The last report has the following illiberal passage :—'The streets are now so crowded with disorderly shoe-blacks unconnected with any society, that the committee have great difficulty in establishing any fresh stations, and even in maintaining some of their old ones. In the Bill* now before Parliament for the Traffic Regulation of the Metropolis, a clause has been introduced which will give the police greater powers for regulating all street shoe-blacks, and protecting the public from annoyance.'

Here is penny wise and pound foolish management with a vengeance, and a noteworthy example of the selfishness often underlying sentimental trading. While ninety-nine boots out of a hundred go unpolished in the streets, it is evident that the Society's boys are not capable of doing all the work in the market. Those who desert from the ranks of the association, and those who start to get an honest living out of a brush and blacking-bottle without ever joining the Society, have a very good reason for their conduct. Speaking to one of the former boys the other day, I asked him why he no longer wore the red livery.

'Left 'em, sir,' he said.

'What for?' I asked.

'A good many things. I can go to work a hour earlier than they goes, an' work ever so much later.'

'And the police—do they move you on?'

'Sometimes.'

'What then?'

'I hooks it round the corner.'

Magna Charta was, of course, not signed for such a poor social atom as this, and the British Constitution was only made for his betters. Still there is something that sets the blood boiling when such boys are roughly 'moved on,' and driven from fair, open, honest work to skulking and stealing. Scarcely a day passes that I do not walk half a dozen miles through the London streets, and I am particularly interested in watching the 'opposition' shoeblacks. Taking

* This choice specimen of over-legislation is now law.

them altogether, as far as my own observation goes, I have found them as steady and well-conducted as the Society's boys, and they represent a far more wholesome trading principle. The reports of the Society on this head are narrow-minded and short-sighted. The Jack Cadeism which attempts to fix the price of shoe-cleaning at one penny, becomes eminently protective and uncharitable when it speaks of its competitors. The Society talks vaguely of the evils which have resulted, not merely to the liveried boys, but to the opposition boys themselves, and to the public at large, from the increased swarms of vagrant shoeblacks who infest the streets under the pretence of earning a living. Such a statement as this is full of falsehood, unfounded assumptions, and error. The boys are not vagrants, and they *do* earn a living by shoe-blacking. The public are not injured, and even if they were, they know very well how to protect themselves without the aid of an interested society. A loud and constant call for legislative interference is always made by such advocates, without any regard to individual liberty. 'Those,' they say, in a former report, 'who are most interested in the shoe-black movement foresee that, unless measures be taken to protect those who are quietly pursuing their business, and to repress the unruly conduct of others, the whole occupation may become so full of danger to the morals of the boys and of nuisance to the public, that, notwithstanding the benefits which would follow if it was properly regulated, its suppression may become an unfortunate necessity.'

Such writing as this might be put forward by the old omnibus interest, to show the propriety of destroying all competitors. Our boots on our legs are surely our own, and we can put them into the hands of any one we please. The pleasures and advantages of Government regulation in any branch of industry have been tested before to-day, and found wanting. We all know that cabs and Parliamentary trains are the slowest, dearest, and the dirtiest of our travelling vehicles.

The committee of the Central Society certainly deserve credit for trying to give effect to what they preach, by obstinate attempts to obtain legislative enactments for their own benefit. As they were in 1857, so they are in 1867.

As all shoe-blacks, however, cannot be first filtered through a ragged school before they find their way to the streets—and it is not generally considered well that they should be so filtered—the Society had better devote all its care to its internal management, instead of

writing protectionist letters to the Home Secretary. At present, it appears to draw about eight pounds sterling every year from each boy, and one boy out of two seems to be dissatisfied with this arrangement. If it is to keep such a position amongst sentimental trading associations as its friends could wish, it must be more benevolent to its supporters, and more charitable to its opponents.

INEXHAUSTIBLE HATS.

MOST persons are familiar with the trick that conjurers perform, in which a truck-load of feathers, a few score of tin-cups, and a clothes-basket full of flowers, are brought from an apparently empty hat. They must recollect how the mysterious fountain seemed never tired of welling up, and how, when it had ceased for a few seconds, it was again set flowing at the request of a lady or a child. The trick is popularly known by the title of the 'inexhaustible hat,' and has many imitations in the legerdemain of trade.

A 'calamitous fire' at some large wholesale City warehouse, especially if it be in the clothing trade, is an inexhaustible hat, from which there is an almost ceaseless flow of 'salvage stock.' Almost before the damp hose has ceased playing on the smoking sky-roofed building in Wadding Street, or Fustianbury, there is scarcely a retail slapperdasher from Blackwall to Hammersmith, and from Highgate to Norwood, whose shop has not broken out in a dreadful rash of placards, notes of admiration, and damaged goods. As in the antiquarian market you will always find the supply of Oliver Cromwell's skulls to be equal to the demand; as in the superstitious market you can get the holy coats, and blood and teeth of saints in any quantity, sent any distance (on the receipt of a post-office order), carriage free; so in the pushing, cutting, puffing slapperdashers' market, where we are compelled to go for the adornment of our bodies, there is no limit to the material that has been liberally bought, after it has been providentially saved. Dingy old nightmare patterns, be-

longing to an age before the existence of schools of design, are dragged, once more, in fearful quantities, before the light of day. Like Othello, they cannot be loved for any beauty of colour or form, and only for the dangers they are supposed to have passed through, while the devouring element was striving to secure them as its prey. The rolls of calico that (according to advertisement) have been damaged by water at a single fire are only equalled by one of those cities that have been suddenly swallowed up by the sea. The miles of gaudy ribbon that (according to advertisement) are unrolled from the mouth of the charred and blackened ruin, are as endless in reality as that other ribbon seems to be which comes from the mouth of the mountebank at a fair.

An important bankruptcy is another inexhaustible hat, as bountiful in its yield of bargains and sacrificial goods as any calamitous City fire. The Anglo-Saxon energy—the keenness and activity that make commercial capital out of these commercial disasters—are still chiefly confined to the clothing trade. A glance at the slapperdashing shops in any thoroughfare or principal by-street of the metropolis and suburbs will show what a number of enterprising traders have speculated in the bankrupt stock of Messrs Strawboy and Rag. Though the muslins may be rotten—the colours fast to go, not fast to stay—and the prints of the same barbarous outline and colour as the stock that was foolishly saved from destruction by fire—yet each enterprising slapperdasher has not only bought them all, but, more wonderful still, has got them all, as the ready-money purchasers of London are invited to see and judge for themselves. Our wives and daughters are first clothed in salvage stock, that has been desperately torn from the embraces of the flames; and then they are invited to adorn their lovely persons in garments of miraculous cheapness, that have been bought in a hundred places at once by the sanction of the official assignee. The inexhaustible hat of bankruptcy will overflow with every kind of textile fabric (except those for which the manufacturer is supposed to have been honestly paid) as long as the performance seems agreeable to the public taste.

A sale by auction, where the household gods of the bankrupt are brought to the hammer, is an inexhaustible hat of an equally marvellous and deceptive kind. A few passes of the auctioneer's magic pen, and the old motto is proved to be wrong, for out of nothing comes almost everything. The home of insolvency is transformed into a horn of plenty, and the bankrupt, in the hour of his adversity, finds him-

self the apparent possessor of a variety of luxuries, each one of which is sufficient to prove that his private expenditure must have been of the most reckless kind.

The bill that announces the forthcoming *bonâ fide* sale has long been recognized as a work of literary art. It begins with the legal heading of 'In re Richard Jones, a bankrupt,' though it omits to state that Richard Jones was conducting a small business as a draper in an eight-roomed house (including the shop) at Somers Town. It soon passes from the dry, unimaginative, unelastic phrases of the law, into the rapturous vocabulary of the auction mart. A little way down the bill, we come upon a prominent ridge of type, describing, in glowing terms, a magnificent-toned, full-sized, walnut piano. (The piano used to be of rosewood, but walnut is now your only fashionable wear.) Passing over a valley of small type, which contains a brief mention of breakfast, dinner, and tea services, easy-chairs, matting, bedding, kitchen utensils, etc., etc., we come upon another series of large and small ridges devoted to exquisite drawing-room suites in silk and velvet, large-sized brilliant plate chimney-glass in richly-gilt carved wood frame, portfolios of prints containing the choicest specimens of the early masters, Arabian bedsteads, dining-room suite in Spanish mahogany covered in the best morocco leather, marble slab and plate-glass chiffonier, china vases, cut-glass lustres, spring stuffed settees, noble telescope dining-table, papier-mâché occasional chairs, superb ormolu fourteen-day striking clock, fine oval loo-table, and rich three-thread tapestry Brussels carpets. Other ridges of type are devoted to other similar articles, including oil and water-colour pictures, and a small cellar of well-selected wine; until Richard Jones, the small bankrupt draper in the eight-roomed house (including the shop) at Somers Town, is transformed into a fraudulent Sardanapalus, feeding upon the property of his creditors.

If the sale were of that extensive public character which auction-mart proprietors always lay claim to in their advertisements, it might, perhaps, be worth the while of Richard Jones, a bankrupt, to protest against such a gross misrepresentation of his private life. As these sales, however, are confined to the small business connection of a particular auctioneer, who has a special reputation for selling furniture, as other auctioneers have a special reputation for selling books, or house property, or works of art; and as two-thirds of the frequenters of these sales are brokers and professional purchasers (chiefly Jews), who fully understand the tricks of trade legerdemain by which the

furniture of an humble eight-roomed house at Somers Town is swelled into the contents of several well-appointed family mansions; there is no occasion for Richard Jones, a bankrupt, to trouble himself about his damaged reputation, even if he follow his lost household gods to their final place of sale. He will see his well-worn chairs and couches; his table on which he carved his children's dinner; his looking-glass in which he shaved himself before his bankruptcy; his sofa on which he slept over his weekly paper on a Sunday afternoon; his pictures of a stage-coach in full swing on a country road, and a kitchen table containing a loaf of bread, a cut cheese, two onions, and a glass of ale, which specimens of art were given him, as a marriage present, by an uncle who was formerly in the public line; he will see all these things, and many others, that have cast off the familiar household faces they once wore, and have put on such a dusty, tied up, packed, and lotted look, that he will almost pass them by as utter strangers amidst the crowd of console tables, toilet services, Circassian cloth curtains, winged wardrobes, and marble washstands, that bewilder him on every side. He will have no recollection of ever being the possessor of a sweet-toned harmonium, containing ten stops—clarionet, flute, sourdine, bourdon, cor Anglais, grand jeu, expression, tremulo, and two fortes; and yet he will find this complicated instrument figuring in the catalogue under the cover of his bankrupt name. He will see the eager and careful Israelite, who knows a good deal of guile, going over the articles, one by one, with the catalogue, the day before the sale; punching beds that are not his beds, jumping upon sofas (to try the springs) that are not his sofas, turning up loo-tables (to examine the hinges) that are not his tables, looking at the backs and fronts of pictures that are not his pictures, and pinching all kinds of solid articles (as if they were made of India-rubber) that never had a place in his domestic castle, although his commercial calamity has, in some way, forced them to a premature and *bonâ fide* sale.

When the hour arrives for the rostrum to be mounted, he will find himself alluded to as a person of considerable taste and judgment in furnishing a house, although unfortunate in conducting the ordinary operations of trade. He will find that the two-thirds of professional purchasers, including the eager and careful Israelite who know a good deal of guile, are not in the habit of paying the slightest attention to the preliminary remarks of the auctioneer, and only awake to a sense of business when the bidding for the first lot has actively commenced. He will find himself amongst an outer crust of private, inexperienced

bidders—bargain-hunters, furnishing house-keepers, lodging-letters, and persons about to marry. He will find that when this outer crust of auction visitors is not tempted to make any offers for the particular lot which the auctioneer is dwelling upon, the inner circle of professional purchasers—a banded society of brokers and brokers' men—obtain, in most cases, an easy bargain as their prey. When, however, the outer crust of amateur bidders is moved to enter into competition with the regular professional hands, there is a murmur of savage opposition heard running through the Israelites in front, and a combination of brokers and purchasers upon commission prevents the outsiders getting the coveted article below the regular high broker price. When the sale has reached the half-way house—the small cellar of well-selected wine—and tasting samples, with bread-and-cheese, are being handed round for the refreshment of the visitors, the bankrupt will have found that, to purchase back even his own household gods in the cheapest way, he must place himself in the hands of a buyer upon commission, a broker, or a broker's agent, generally one of the Israelites, who knows a good deal of guile. Trade-conjuring has brought things out of his house that were never in it; and only trade-conjuring can replace those things that were once really there.

FIRST-FLOOR WINDOWS.

I AM not one of those impertinent modern devils upon two sticks—the men upon stilts. I am not a window-cleaner (fearful trade!), a house-painter, nor a performer on the acrobatic 'perch,' but simply an omnibus traveller through the London streets, who always prefers to sit outside. I spend much time and money on the top of these useful vehicles, and I never attempt to secure the box-seat. I never smoke, and I have, therefore, no cigars to offer to the driver; I know nothing of horses, and my conversational powers are, therefore, too limited for a box-seat passenger. My place is the knife-board; and there I sit, watching those two intelligent eyes of every passing household—the first-floor

windows—not offensively, I hope: not pryingly, I know: but lazily, and, perhaps, reflectively, like a boy who jolts into London from some pleasant country road in summer, lying face downwards on a carted bed of tares.

From this position I have seen you, fattest of fat men, dweller in that old English fifteenth-century house, with the pointed roof, in one of the main thoroughfares. I have watched you on a sultry June morning, perhaps, before business hours, squeezed through that small, overhanging first-floor window, smoking that heavy meerschaum-pipe, whose bowl hung dangling almost upon the hats of the passers-by. I have gazed upon you as you leaned forward, without any regard to the antique building that sustained you, until I thought the whole bulging fabric would have fallen, in powdered feebleness, into the street. The small low hutch, or shop, immediately under your folded arms, in whose doorway a little child could scarcely stand upright, has sunk in on one side, like a hat that has been sat upon in a railway carriage. Is it with the weight of your vast bulk? For so it appears to me.

How often, too, have I seen you, rosy-cheeked shop-boy, standing upon the leaden ledge of that shop to clean these first-floor windows? Why is the little maid-of-all-work (and no play) sent to clean the inside of the glass, while you are polishing the outside? Is it out of kindness to give her some glimpses of a holiday? Of course, the task is a long while in hand, and many customers' parcels below are waiting to be taken out; for window-cleaning, by two such labourers, includes a good deal of face-making and face-dodging through the glass, besides a little romping and flirtation. The wash-leather drops (quite accidentally) into the street, and has to be picked up by another boy, who enviously watches the whole proceedings from the pavement below. Perhaps he is a rival suitor for the hand of the young Cinderella above, who looks upon him, with her nose flattened against the window-pane. Crash goes the glass, as a matter of course, and the timid youth in the street decamps like a young deer. Will the faithful swain on the shop-ledge take the blame boldly upon himself, and be haunted by a phantom tenpence which is always going to be stopped out of his wages? Perhaps.

How many first-floor windows have I seen that are covered with large effigies of teapots, dustpans, and Wellington boots? Trade is a wise, a profitable, and an honourable thing; but it ought to be confined to the shop. If I took tea in drawing-rooms over tea-ware-

houses, hardware-warehouses, and boot-warehouses, I should not like to see the shadow of some great property emblem of my entertainer's trade cast across the table, while the substance obscured, at once, the prospect and the light. Next to a shark, or some other sea-monster, peeping into my cabin porthole, I should object to a gigantic dust-pan, or a body-bath, across my first-floor window.

I have often passed by that large chapel-like first-floor window over a tavern, and well I know to what it leads. Long-room, or club-room: faded piano in corner, horsehair seats all round the wall; smell of beer and tobacco; sawdust and sand; crossed pipes on tables; canopy at the end (like the theatrical tent of Richard the Third on Bosworth Field), the seat of the Perpetual Grand President of the United Order of Provident Tipplers. Prudence is good in fathers of families, especially when influencing a taste for gin-and-water. There is something dry and sepulchral about savings' banks. 'Nothing like a tavern fund, with a tavern treasurer, and tavern conviviality over the periodical payments,—to diminish the savings.

A short length of aristocratic by-street and canaries swinging in cages, give place to window conservatories, aquariums, small household jungles; pretty little boxes of imported Nature made to order in a pretty artificial manner, like a waterfall at a public exhibition. All the life in the street is shut out by shrubs in which snakes may have crept, and through which no vulgar, inquiring gaze can penetrate. No matter. Pass on to the next.

A sulky, frowning individual is standing, with his hands in his pockets, full between the snow-flaked muslin curtains, lowering at the world. There may be a skeleton of temper in this particular house; but it is hardly wise to dance its bony legs in public.

Take a lesson from your next-door neighbour, whose feelings are soothed by playing upon the harp; as he seems to tell us by displaying the instrument so fully in the window. Past several China jars, between rich ruby curtains; past another conservatory, thinly planted, in which the Hon. Mr Romeo is paying his received attentions to the Hon. Miss Juliet; and a sudden turn of the vehicle plunges us amidst another layer of first-floor windows.

Still the same sick paralyzed child, whose bed has been behind that curtain for so many years; whose face never seems to grow any larger, and who is always playing, in summer, with that parched and sun-dried box of mignonette. Still the same vacant, gaping empty rooms to let, through which you can see the walls in the close yards

at the back. Still the same slovenly, broken, lop-sided Venetian blinds, barely covering the dirty windows, which open on rooms whose picture it is not difficult to draw. Threads upon the floor, saucepans upon the hearth-rugs, kettles upon the tables, women in curl-papers in the afternoon, and generally nothing but yellowness, dirt, and rags. One change has come over the first-floor windows of the street, and that is where a new inhabitant—a refugee—sticking up a board in his cheap apartments, announcing that he teaches Syriac, coolly intimates his desire to be starved to death.

Another turn of the vehicle, and we are in a leading thoroughfare once more.

How many tradespeople has royalty appointed, from time to time, and empowered to raise the national coat-of-arms between their first-floor windows? And, when raised, do they make the gooseberries larger, the meat sweeter, the bread purer? One house of business that boasts this mark of distinguished patronage is proud of concealing every sign of its trade. Not a shred, not a patch, not an atom of anything shows itself either in the first-floor windows or any others. There is no name over the doorway to distinguish the house from a club-house, a public institution, a government office, a place for weighing money or trying guns, a Trinity-house (whatever that may be), or even a family mansion of sober aspect. Looking more closely at the building, you see the name of 'Benbows' in small letters, and that is all the vulgar publicity which this distinguished house requires. It is its pride to be known as Benbows—nothing more. If any dwellers in England are not acquainted with Benbows they argue themselves unknown. I have just heard that Benbows is an upholsterer. Thank you.

That is a quiet first-floor window, with its neat short Venetian blinds (like a window in a clean Dutch picture), where the bust of Galen looks down complacently upon a nursemaid showing the passing coaches to a sturdy infant. Below, there is plenty of brimstone and treacle to last the child its life, for its father is a chemist; and, though some people may affect to call him a poor apothecary (after Shakespeare), his profits are greater than many surgeons', and his sitting-rooms have all the prim severity of a physician's study.

How often have I passed and repassed you, serenest and stoutest of womankind, to find you growing more stout and more serene every time I see you? You have retired from business, which is very wise; but still you sit over it, which is wiser still. While the human ants

are busy in your thriving hosier's shop below, while you can hear the profitable tramp of feet, and even the chink of money on the counters, you have nothing to do but to watch the street traffic, and devour the periodical literature of your country. Of course you took your late husband's foreman into partnership, which accounts for the 'Co.' that is added to the familiar name, and for the leisure you are enjoying as the representative of capital.

Past those dusty ground-glass windows that hide the stooping law-writers; past first-floor windows full of shirt-collars; past others full of strange-shaped monsters that are made of india-rubber, and warranted waterproof; past others full of gigantic toys that drive young passengers frantic, and large open-mouthed masks through which the professional pantomimist must surely leap, in spite of the whole available body of real policemen; past the watchmaker's over a pastry-cook's, where a number of grave-looking men are peeping through the shortest of telescopes, apparently watching the tart-eaters below; past what looks like a public picture-gallery, but which is a fine art sale-room; and past a first-floor window, standing between two polished columns of the colour of raspberry jam, high up above the opposite house-tops.

Down again from this long-legged looking specimen of the revived Babylonian, or trading palatial style of architecture, to an accessible first-floor window of a common barber's shop, wherein is the living picture of the lathered lamb awaiting the sacrifice. The operator is sharpening his razor on a hanging strap that is near the window, and is telling that old, old story of which the weather forms the most noticeable part.

How often have I seen that young Juliet at No. 4, and that young Romeo at No. 5, sitting, back to back, in adjoining houses; each reading a book, and each unconscious of the other's presence; both evidently formed for each other, and yet never destined to come together; each going down the narrow, separate pathways of life, that never meet, and yet being only divided by a two-foot brick wall.

The first-floor windows of my theatre make me melancholy, because they lie at the back, and are always filled with wretched fragments of paper, boards, and scenery, instead of glass.

The first-floor window of my parish church (the first-floor over the gravestones) never pleases me on a working-day, because I look through the dingy glass (we have a horror of coloured devices at our establishment), and see a female pew-opener standing in the pulpit,

dusting the feather-bed cushions, and a common charwoman mopping the ten commandments.

The first-floor windows of my workhouse—that is, the workhouse which I help to support by paying heavy poor's-rates—always annoy me, because, at whatever hour of the night or morning I happen to pass them, they are lighted up with costly gas throughout the whole length and breadth of the building, as if for some great midnight orgie.

PEACOCKISM.

E are always ready to preach to the lower orders; to lecture them upon the vices of dirt and rags, and the folly of intemperance. We too often shut our eyes to our own faults, while pointing out those of our poorer neighbours. Cleanliness may be so stretched as to become a vice, dress may exhibit as much personal recklessness on the part of the wearer as rags; and there may be as much intemperance in indulging in certain bonnets and shawls as in beer-bibbing and gin-drinking.

Peacockism in dress has increased to an alarming extent of late years, fostered by the bold fulness of a recent fashion; and I am sorry to say that the ladies are the chief offenders. There is no such creature in England as the human male peacock. The bird who mates with the female peacock appears to belong to a totally different species. He boasts of no plumage—especially of late years; of no covering that can be considered very costly or attractive. His hue is chiefly confined to black, or brown, or drab, and economy seems to be studied quite as much as elegance. His trousers, or leggings, are only about sixteen shillings a pair; his coats about two or three guineas each; and everything he wears is in the same proportion. His evening dress is so contrived that he might appear in it for years, and no one be aware of his slender wardrobe. His 'walking suit,' at two pounds four shillings, is a leveller of all class distinctions. No men have certainly hit Toryism so hard as the new race of cheap tailors.

How different is it, however, with the human peacock proper—the female mate of this somewhat dingy bird! She lives, apparently, only for her plumage. Take that away from her, and life seems no longer to have any attraction. This plumage may be gaudy, or not, according to her taste, but it must always be costly and luxurious, and made with little regard to her position in the world. In proportion as her means to pay for these feathers diminish, her desire to obtain them seems to increase. The same may also be said of her power to obtain them, for credit is seldom given more freely than when it is recklessly demanded. Here is a part, and a very small part, of an account, amounting to nearly £3000, recently proved against a lady by a West-End milliner in the London Court of Bankruptcy :—

Court dress of gold and white lace, and train of brocaded gold, silk lining, embroidered glacé skirt, additional glacé, and flounces of gold	£55	10	0
Lace tucker	0	18	0
Pink roses and leaves	1	5	0
White and silver wreath and Brussels lappet	4	14	6
Dressing four dolls	12	12	0
Brussels lace cap, pink roses and brown leaves	4	14	6
Point lace cap, lilac and pearls	11	11	0
Making train into dress, silk linings, stiff net blonde, and pearls	11	9	0
Pair Venice point sleeves	4	4	0
Pair of lappets	8	8	0
Point lace	10	10	0
Green brocaded moire-antique dress, pink ribbon, fringe, and tassels	19	19	0
White blonde bonnet, with pink roses	4	4	0
Renovating bonnet	0	18	0
Black lace bonnet, velvet leaves, roses, and white flowers	3	18	0
Black lace fichu, lilac ribbon	1	15	0
Re-trimming evening tulle dress, stiff net and black velvet	5	18	6
Carmelite mourning dress	3	13	6
Scarf, with lace	5	15	6
Black moire-antique morning-dress	13	15	9
Glacé mantle, with lace	12	12	0
Point lace parasol	18	18	0
Venice point flounce	84	0	0
Rose point bonnet	14	14	0
Point lace trimming for velvet dress	36	15	0
Nine yards Brussels lace flouncing	28	14	0
A Brussels lace square	31	10	0
A black lace ditto	31	10	0
Three ditto flounces	31	10	0
Pair Brussels lace sleeves and lace for body	4	4	0
Pair Lisle lace sleeves, with white satin	4	4	0

Pair Mechlin sleeves, and lace for body	5	5	0
Venice point lace	13	2	6
Covering parasol handle with lace and silk	12	12	0
White glacé parasol with French lace	10	10	0
Brussels lace handkerchief	6	6	0
A steel spring hoop	2	2	0
Brown velvet mantle, Maltese lace and trimmings	16	16	0
Black velvet goat sable something	73	10	0
Mantle of brown velvet, and trimmings	16	16	0
Drab and blue cloth coat, steel buttons	8	8	0
White blonde mantilla	15	15	0

The human peacock, as we see by this melancholy record of folly and waste, will sometimes be decently happy in a plumage valued at four or five pounds sterling; at others she will be fretful under a plumage of thirty pounds, and only supremely contented when it represents nearly a hundred pounds. Much will depend upon the 'society' she is keeping, and the rivals she meets; for peacockism has its leaders and its followers, its struggles and its contests, its hungry ambition and its gnawing envy, the same as any other field of emulation. When it takes the form of a race for notoriety between two fashionable peacocks of equal daring, it is difficult to say what combinations of grace and extravagance may not be effected. Jewels may be the weapons selected if the peacocks are middle-aged, or some new material from Lyons adorned with precious yellow, dusty lace if they are a little younger. Lace is a favourite adornment of the fashionable peacock. She collects it, as people collect old china, or rare engravings; and when she orders a collar at thirty pounds, or a handkerchief at fifteen pounds, upon three years' credit, she calls that 'making a good investment of her capital.' Whatever suit of plumage a fashionable peacock may array herself in, it is her unalterable rule never to appear in society with it more than once. Society is only composed of a certain number of birds, who each, in their turn, become the centres round which the others revolve. It never seems to have struck these fashionable peacocks that they are parts in a living, moving, breathing kaleidoscope, and that an infinite variety of effects may be created by the same colours and the same pieces. They change their plumage at every movement of the glass, in ignorance of this principle, and often annoy each other by producing the monotony they are laboriously seeking to avoid.

If nature provided the feathers of these birds, there would be

nothing more to say, but nature, in this case, has left this duty to the milliner.

The fashionable milliner is able to carry on her business without cash payments. The sole *nexus* between man and man (according to Mr Thomas Carlyle) is not required between woman and woman. The fashionable milliner lives by giving and taking credit. She dresses up her peacock dolls, and seems only to ask that their names shall appear upon her books, and their appearance shall do her justice in the world of fashion. She thinks nothing of trusting a distinguished peacock with feathers to the extent of four, six, or eight hundred pounds sterling, and for any period within the statute of limitations. If the peacock is very bold, or very distinguished, indeed, this mark of trading confidence (as we have just seen) may be extended to some thousands sterling. When one capital is exhausted, the fashionable milliner 'calls up' another, and her call is seldom uttered in vain in the ear of her 'wholesale houses.' Brilliant as the plumage of the West may seem in the height of the peacock season, the feathers are nearly all the property of dingy streets in the City.

The fashionable milliner sometimes provides her peacocks with jewels, and assumes the character of a buyer as well as a seller. The way in which the peacock borrows money is a lesson to all students in finance. Her first step is to select bracelets, necklaces, and brooches to the amount of a hundred, or a hundred and fifty pounds, and to wear them, on a few occasions, when she goes into society. Her second step is to tell her milliner that 'she positively hates the sight' of these jewels, after a few weeks, which causes the milliner to offer to repurchase them at half their nominal value. Her third step is to accept this offer, which brings her fifty or seventy pounds, while the jewels still stand against her at the usual term of credit. Her old feathers—the dresses she has worn two or three times—she often deals with in the same manner, and either converts them into ready-money, or a payment off her account. This is a clever way of raising a loan, and concealing its ruinous character under the cover of a sale; but sometimes the fashionable peacock is much more straightforward in her dealings. She has her I O U's, and her bills of exchange, if the fashionable milliner is willing to discount them, and the spectre of 'sixty per cent.' appears in the boudoir, perhaps quite as often as it does in the smoking-room. She sometimes speaks of her 'marriage-settlement,' when she enters upon these transactions, and laments that her 'dividend-day' is so long in coming round. It may happen that

this marriage-settlement and dividend-day have only an imaginary existence; though they serve, for a time, to keep off the demand which the male peacock must eventually pay. Sometimes no such agreeable fiction is offered or expected, and money being freely sold to the female peacock, is paid for by the male peacock (if it is ever paid for) under the disguise of 'velvet trimmings,' or 'Honiton lace extras.'

Though money is thus often extracted by the fashionable peacock from the fashionable milliner, it is very rare, indeed, that the process is allowed to be reversed. The fashionable milliner is so schooled into a fear of losing her 'connection,' that she is afraid to refuse credit to any member, hanger-on, or dependant of the 'great families,' and afraid to ask for even partial payment, years after the credit has been given. She is taught to believe in secret cliques of united peacocks, who combine to resent any insult that is offered to their species. A demand for money is such an insult, and dunning is looked upon as a mortal offence. What are creditors for (as the hero remarks in the 'Game of Speculation') but to give credit? The vulgar tradespeople must wait. If they decline to do this, they must take the consequences, and these consequences are sometimes threats to pay. When the fashionable peacock produces the money under these circumstances to 'close the account,' the fashionable milliner is taught to believe that from that hour her business will begin to decay.

The fashionable peacock, however, has seldom the power to play the tyrant which she affects to possess; and she is more often bound hand and foot in the fetters of the milliner. Her feathers are generally procured without the sanction of that dingy male bird whom she calls her husband, and all her ingenuity, and that of her confidential servant—her lady's-maid—are exercised to keep from him, as long as possible, the knowledge of the liability hanging over his head. Perhaps his eyes ought to be opened by the sensation his wife is making in the peacock-world, and by the appearance of his infant son, aged ten months, attired like Richard the Third, and his eldest son, aged seven years, dressed in silk velvet and jet bugles, like Hamlet the Dane. If his eyes are opened by these things, and his will is strong, the growing peacockism of his household is speedily and effectively checked. The feather-money of his peacock-mate is not only granted, but its outlay is carefully watched, and its produce is periodically surveyed. Few of these dingy male birds have the intelligence, industry, and courage, however, to see and do this, and the milliner is left

undisturbed to adorn the peacock in any plumage her taste and extravagance may select.

When the fashionable milliner receives instructions to 'cook' the bill whose delivery can no longer be delayed: to turn the account of one costly garment into two that are not so costly; to place that to the children's charge which ought to go to the mother's; and to keep back one-half of the amount to be rendered at a future period, she begins to feel that this peacock-customer is, in some degree, in her power. A gentle hint that money must be had, and an affected reluctance to apply to the dingy male bird, are generally found to bring a little of that precious metal to the surface, whose appearance is so extremely rare. In some cases even this promising process is known to fail, and, upon inquiry, it is then often found that the dingy male bird, behind the screen, was careless of his peacock-mate's accumulating plumage, because he felt in that state of chronic insolvency which no law is able to cure.

The principle that high profits must be made to cover high risks applies to all businesses, and to that of a fashionable milliner amongst the rest. It is under the practical operation of this principle that good debtors are compelled to make up the losses sustained by the bad ones. The ultra-peacockism of the present hour is remarkable for being built upon credit—a blind, unwavering credit—that asks only to hear the rumble of a carriage, and to catch a glimpse of a footman's plush. The gaudy bubble can never burst while credit remains as it is, because no pressure is ever likely to be applied. The loss, if any, is not felt so much by the fashionable milliner, who seems to suffer as she feeds her peacocks, for the peacocks really feed upon one another, the bad upon the good. The dowdyism that does pay, and the moderate peacockism that can pay, together are the great supporters of that ultra-peacockism, which never did pay, and never will.

THE JOCULAR MIND.

FOR some years past we have been entertained by a knot of small wits, who take unto themselves the title of social satirists. Their ambition seems to be satisfied when they have ridiculed the cut of a man's coat or a woman's gown, or the rude boor who uses his knife with salmon. They make no pretension to reform the human heart, to check vices, or to teach principles; they are content if they can pry into the kitchen when the mistress's back is turned, or can get just such a glimpse of life as must be familiar to most footmen and housemaids. They lift the veil from many struggling households, and show us how much of the plate is really silver, how much is electro-gilded, and how much is borrowed for state occasions. They tell us which sofa is stuffed with horse-hair, and which with straw; how many times the muslin dress of the eldest daughter has been washed, and the silk dress of the hostess turned or dyed; how much the port wine has cost, and how many bottles there may be in the cellar. They seem to have a horror of nothing except economy and prudence, and bow down and worship that showy elegance which is often based upon credit. They speak contemptuously of all London neighbourhoods that are not prominent in the 'Court Guide,' and give them sweeping general characters, which are drawn entirely from imagination. It is not surprising that such satirists generally love a Lord, and cramp themselves up in stuccoed dwellings on the borders of a fashionable district.

In every bushel of chaff there is a grain of wheat, if we only take the pains to seek it, and the social satire with which we have been feasted for the last twenty years, may not have been entirely useless within its proper limits. Although it has, doubtless, helped to foster that extravagance of living, which is one of the greatest vices of the present time, it may have kept a few weak people from striving after a false appearance. If these people, however, had had the courage, dash, and ingenuity to rush into debt, they might have made their coveted dis-

play, and have escaped the lash of the censor. The social satirist, looking no lower than the surface, with all his occasional affectation of depth, would never have been shocked by anything not offensive to 'good taste.' No hole could have been picked in Redpath's coat until the morning of his arrest for forgery, and the admiring social satirists who dined at his graceful table must grieve that such a faultless patron of art is now a condemned convict. The money he stole from vulgar shareholders was spent with so much aristocratic judgment, that, according to the teaching of social satire, some retired soap-boiler ought to have been transported as his substitute.

This open, avowed preference for elegant wrong, and contempt for inelegant right, is peculiar to much satire which has lately aspired to lead public opinion. It trades upon a few parrot-phrases, eked out with a few well-worn caricature signs, and shows us how much is made of a little wit by satirists who have neither invention nor principle. If the faded dress which is turned and patched, and worn with a self-satisfied, would-be distinguished air, is such a target for these terrible satirists, how is it that they constantly adopt the same old forms of ridicule, which must be as familiar to their public as the loaf on the breakfast-table? There is surely much here of patching and turning, of wearing threadbare, of keeping up appearances. The stock-in-trade of our professional satirists can be held upon a platter, can be counted on the fingers. It consists of a few deceptive tricks, and a few dressed-up puppets that were never instructive, and have almost ceased to be amusing.

One favourite caricature with the jocular mind is an exaggerated Jewish nose. No one can tell exactly when this caricature was first used, or what it precisely means; but it is a sign or symbol that is worked very vigorously against the Jewish race. Some people look upon it as a punishment for usury, forgetting that lending money at high rates of interest is not confined to the Jews, and that there must be two persons to every usurious transaction—a borrower as well as a lender. Other people regard it as a punishment for giving out slop-work at low prices, forgetting that labour is the best judge of its own value, and that masters have about as much power to raise wages to some sentimental height demanded by a few enthusiasts, as they have to raise the tide a foot higher all over the world. Sometimes the huge curved nose is varied with another symbol—three hats, stuck one upon another, on the top of a venerable hermit's head. This is a sign which is held to speak volumes by those versed in the language of

caricatures. It proves that sixty per cent. is too much to charge bankrupt young noblemen on accommodation bills, and that no shirt ought to be given out to any sempstress at less than three shillings the hour. It is astonishing how liberal your social satirist can be when he is dealing with the property of other people.

Another favourite caricature with the jocular mind is the red nose, and the protruding stomach. By some process of reasoning, not apparent in the caricature, these signs of a not very graceful humanity, are held to prove more than a volume of laboured writing. A man with a red nose cannot be a true patriot or a noble-minded hero, as we are all expected to feel when we look upon the picture. A man with a prominent stomach is not fit to form an opinion on any public question, as we are also all expected to feel when we look upon the picture. A man with a red nose and a prominent stomach combined is a monster capable of any crime, and devoid of all generous sympathies.

Another favourite caricature with the jocular mind is the Quaker's broad-brimmed hat. It appears so often, and is so universally understood to be a symbol of hypocrisy, that there is hardly any occasion to describe it. Its mere outline proves that the wearers are an inferior race, treacherous, selfish, and not to be trusted. It often covers the heads of men called Mawworms, and we all know precisely what a mawworm is. We have never, perhaps, met one in private or public life, but we should know him in a moment from his portrait and description. To be forewarned is to be forearmed, and the mawworm cannot be too often described. He is a slimy villain. His hair is sleek, his eyes are small and blinking, his face is coarse, he has two if not more chins, and a habit of folding his hands and turning up his eyes when speaking. His voice has a peculiar snuffle that is considered to be indicative of great seeming piety; and his limp white neckcloth, and greasy black clothes, give him the aspect of a preacher. He is fond of holding forth upon theological subjects—of improving the occasion, as it is called—and he is nearly always speaking of a future state when his mouth is not filled with buttered muffins. Sometimes he has been known to commit forgery, if it suited his purpose, and he is always trembling on the verge of some hideous crime. The most remarkable thing about this extraordinary creature, according to his artists and historians, is, that he never takes the slightest pains to conceal his real character. He walks, talks, dresses, and behaves in such a peculiar way, that no one can fail to take him for a mawworm.

He can be recognized a mile off by his melancholy victims, and his hypocrisy, so it seems, might be discovered by a child.

The jocular mind has a hundred other favourite caricatures of men, women, and things, that are equally remarkable for their fancy character. Whole nations are treated in the same way as classes or individuals, and we are favoured with caricature pictures of national characteristics. We all know when we see a plaid check that a Scotchman is the wearer, and that that Scotchman represents a thrifty, pushing, prudent, crafty race. No Scotchman was ever seen clothed in any other patterns than checks or plaids, or was ever improvident, drunken, or disorderly. The statistics of Scotch whisky consumption, and the dens of Edinburgh and Glasgow, may seem to disturb this theory, but the caricaturist never stops his pencil for social facts or figures. He persists in drawing all Yorkshiremen cunning, all Frenchmen frivolous, all Englishmen bluff and honest, and all Irishmen jovial, for no other reason than because they have been drawn so for years, in defiance of much evidence showing the falsity of the pictures.

If these caricatures were only the amusements of an idle hour, there would be little occasion to analyze them so closely, but they often profess to be something more than this. The public jester now is not content with the character of a mere jack-pudding, but sets up as a guide, philosopher, and friend. He wishes it to be thought that his mirth is not without a motive, and that the cap and bells may be made an instrument of public instruction. He follows in the rear of more serious and recognized leaders, and instead of pulling a droll face, and singing a comic song, he discourses upon politics, currency, and the law of nations. The buffoon, like many other people, wishes to figure as something which he is not, forgetting that the form in which he is compelled to appear is not adapted for public teaching. A caricature never proved anything, no matter who drew it, and it is nearly sure to be a flatterer of popular prejudice. To test the value of much of this jocular teaching, it is necessary to search the pages of its books for the best part of a century. When the press was fettered, and the pent-up thoughts of millions had no free vent in words, the caricature did its work coarsely, but tolerably well. As the press, however, grew in strength and freedom, the necessity for allegory ceased, and caricatures became more decent as they grew more feeble and scarce. In whatever form, however, they appeared, whether pictorial or literary, whether humorous or scanty, they were never found to be a day in advance of public opinion. They reflected all

the ignorance, all the prejudices of the hour, just as they do now, and made their pupils more ignorant and more bigoted by feeding them upon false types of character.

The rule adopted by the caricaturist, if he acts upon any rule, is to degrade the present, the age he lives in, and the men who are active and prominent in it. No man is a hero to the caricaturist until he has been dead a century. When dead, he is exalted or respected in the same uninquiring way as he is degraded while living. Judging from what we read and see every hour, we may imagine how Luther would have been ridiculed by our present jocular teachers. His face would have been too coarse, and his stomach too large, to make the Reformation more than a sectarian sham. The fine, old, crusted Mawworm caricature would have been put upon the table, and we should have been asked to regard it as a portrait of the Reformer. Melancthon might have fared better, being a more presentable man; but Luther would have been measured round the waist, and found wanting in elegance. The smart 'leaders' that would have been written to prove that the movement was a low, vulgar conspiracy and riot—a daring innovation—a revolution got up to please the rabble and strike at 'the existing order of things'—would have been as plentiful as blackberries. Smart leader-writers and jocular caricaturists would have pulled well together in this matter, shaken hands in the streets, dined together at the clubs, and quoted each other on the mutual admiration principle. About half an hour before the Reformation became a great fact, they would have congratulated themselves and the country on their victory over dangerous 'demagogues.'

There are other great events in the world's history that would have been treated in much the same way by the short-sighted caricaturist. Every man who has ever done any real work, has always had to break through the crowd of jibbering apes who tried to stop his progress. He has met them in shoals, as the knight in the fairy tale met an army of grotesque monsters, who tried to drive him from his duty. The moment, however, the enchanted palace is broken into, and the good work is done, the whole of these monsters either melt into thin air, or turn into an alley of gold-laced lacqueys, who struggle which shall be first in bowing to their new master.

The whole art of being jocular seems to be based upon a few mechanical rules, suited to the meanest capacity, requiring no mental strain, and to be learned with ease in an idle hour. By these rules we shall find that there is something excessively funny in debt, and

that there is no more amusing picture to be drawn than a young man lighting his cigar with writs, and mocking a companion weak enough to have paid a tailor. A sheriff's-officer, with a great-coat and a thick stick, is always looked upon as a safe mirth-provoking sketch; and the humour of a man standing up in a battered hat, with his pockets turned inside out, has never been half exhausted. The same jocular rules teach us that all middle-aged ladies are divided into mothers-in-law and old maids, the first being stout and imperious, and the second thin and vinegar-faced, with a strong determination to conceal their real age. The great rule, however, of the jocular code is the one which decides what trades and professions shall always be considered ridiculous. Tailors, of course, are awarded a leading position in the list, and after them come butchers, doctors, lawyers, with a host of others. In applying this rule to any occurrence which we may wish to put in a ridiculous light, it seems that we have merely to mention the trade of the person we want to humble. A case occurred very recently in which this rule was applied with distinguished success. A certain prime minister went down to the town which he honours with his Parliamentary patronage, to go through the empty ceremony of being re-elected. He stood upon the public platform in the usual old, constitutional way, inviting any criticism from his constituents on his past career, and professing to be ready to answer any troublesome questions. A certain butcher, who shall be nameless, not being aware that these fine professions were not meant to be tested, and that the old rough theory of questioning your member, when you can catch him, had been given up in practice, applied to the noble candidate, in an open, public manner, for a little explanation on points of policy and conduct. The butcher was answered in a way that told him he had done a very impertinent thing; and the smart leader-writers and caricaturists took their tone from his lordship, and badgered the poor tradesman for many weeks afterwards. It was not pretended that he had no right to put the questions; that the questions were not sensibly put; or that the minister was without reproach. All this would have involved that serious argument and patient investigation so distasteful to the jocular mind; so the easier course was adopted of harping upon the word *butcher*. No one who examined the question as put by the small wits of the day, could fail to perceive how absurd it was for a butcher to question a prime minister, and that butcher, too, a provincial butcher. The fact was conveniently forgotten, that a provincial brewer had

once made himself king of England; but small wits and their smaller followers have wonderfully short memories.

The evil resulting from the false types of character which popular caricaturists palm upon a trusting world, is seen in the security given to real rogues and vagabonds. While the public are amused, for example, with that highly fanciful picture of the Mawworm class, the real Mawworm — a slim, elegant hypocrite — is enjoying himself unnoticed. The false picture acts very much like that preconcerted cry of 'Stop, thief!' which is often got up by artful criminals to draw off the attention of the constables. A Mawworm, such as we may observe any hour in our popular literature, or in caricature pictures, would stand about as much chance of succeeding in his villanous design, as a thief would of robbing a house if he knocked at the street-door in the middle of the day, and candidly announced himself as a notorious burglar.

COMIC DISEASES.

NO mad ass is now baited for the intense enjoyment of gentility and fashion; no bull is now turned loose with fireworks; no dog is now roasted alive, or allowed to fight; no rats are killed; no badgers are drawn; no cocks are allowed to spur each other into eternity; the prize-ring has fallen into contempt; the turf is rapidly following in the same direction; the four-in-hand club has just revived—the mere spectral shadow of what it was—and Hockley-in-the-Hole is buried for ever from the public and admiring eye.

There is an Act of Parliament (so I am told) which effectually provides for the legal protection of dumb animals; and there is a society (so I am also told) whose task it is to see that the Act has something more than a mere passive existence.

With all these aids to improve our superficial humanity, and to regulate our conduct to the brute creation, it will naturally be supposed that we are a nation of gentle beings, who have given ourselves up entirely and unreservedly to the study of the fine arts, which has

softened our conduct to a wonderful degree, and is never likely to allow us to become brutal. Never was a greater delusion indulged in by a too credulous nation. We have transferred our brutality, not destroyed it; and where it before found an inferior field for its operation in the bodies of the animal creation, it now gloats, without a blush or a twinge of conscience, upon the painful infirmities which afflict poor suffering humanity.

Medical men have a method of classifying diseases; but their catalogue of miseries—their hand-book of pain—their index of suffering, is anything but perfect. They can tell us what are epidemics, what are endemics, what are pulmonary complaints, what are acute, and what are chronic disorders; but they are no guide to that small but important division—the Comic Diseases.

No one, except farce-writers, low comedians, and comic artists, would believe what an intensely funny thing disease can be made in the hands of a man who thoroughly understands his audience. Sea-sickness (not so much a disease as a passing complaint), if properly handled, is better than all the wit of Swift and all the humour of Smollett. Whoever failed to get a laugh from the picture of the stout man, with the rueful countenance, staggering across the deck towards the side of the vessel? Whoever thinks of women and children lying helplessly in a close and filthy hold, when he is enjoying the humour of a faint gasp for Stew—ard?

People have died under this funny complaint, upon long voyages, but they were evidently persons of very defective stamina, bent upon making themselves disagreeable to their fellow-passengers.

Cholera-morbus, as exhibited through its outward symptoms of violent stomach-ache, is always a safe card to play upon the comic stage, when the dialogue begins to flag, and the interest of the situation has to be kept up by what is technically known as a little extra business.

Listen to the conversation (sometimes rather animated) in the green-room of a theatre the morning after the performance of a new piece, when the author and the manager are busily engaged in the judicious exercise of the pruning-knife.

'What!' says the low comedian to the company generally, 'cut out my stomach-ache in the second act! What have I got left?'

The author is silent and bites his pen; but the stage-manager ventures upon a mild remonstrance.

'No,' returns the low comedian in a decided tone, walking out of the room amongst the wings, upon the stage, 'I don't go on in that act without my stomach-ache.'

Then the old gentleman of the theatre, taking courage from his brother-actor, stands up manfully for his gout, which 'went' so immensely with the audience on the previous night.

'I hope, sir, you don't intend to cut my gout.'

'We have just come to that part, Mr Gills,' replies the manager, blandly.

'I can't afford to lose a bit of it,' returns Mr Gills, getting a little excited.

'I'm afraid we must prune it down; it interferes with the action of the piece, and you don't get much out of it.'

'Don't get much out of it!' almost shouts Mr Gills. 'If you'd been in front last night and had heard the shouts of applause, when my undutiful son kicked me violently upon the bad leg, you wouldn't say so.'

'Oh, yes,' breaks in the author at this point, 'I think when boy kicks leg——'

'Very well,' returns the manager, 'let it stand; but what about the tea-urn scene?'

'Oh!' says Mr Gills, with an air of affected resignation, 'if you touch that, I'd better resign the part.'

'It's too long,' says the manager, firmly.

'Do you think so?' mildly inquires the author; 'we may prune the dialogue a little, but the situation, in my humble opinion, ought to be preserved.'

The situation is preserved, as a matter of course, and without prying farther into the council of the green-room, we can easily imagine what it is. Given a tea-urn, and a gouty man upon the stage, and it is required to know what a popular dramatist will do with them.

The gouty man, stout, red-faced, helpless, testy, and much padded about the legs, will be wheeled on in a chair by the comic servant, and fixed at the breakfast table. A tea-urn will then be brought in, foaming like a brewhouse copper, and placed upon the table, when the comic servant will withdraw. After a few seconds taken up with speaking, and the business of the table, the gouty man will find the water dripping rapidly from the tea-urn upon the worst of his two lame legs, which it is totally out of his power to move.

The gouty man cannot reach a bell, and he knocks violently on the floor with a thick stick, the audience in the mean time roaring with delight, when they are made fully aware of the humour of the position. After a most unwarrantable delay, the comic servant makes his appearance with anything but signs of pity and contrition upon his countenance. He pretends to be nearly bursting with half-concealed laughter, at which the audience shout in sympathy, and when he condescends to recover his speech, and addresses his afflicted master, who is suffering from a painful disease, most painfully aggravated by the consequences of his gross neglect, instead of asking pardon, as in duty bound, he says, in the tone of an injured and unappreciated servant: 'Well, sir, if I don't give satisfaction, I'd better leave!'

If the stage is a faithful reflex of the manners of the time (and we are bound to consider it so, according to the highest authorities) we have small reason to congratulate ourselves upon the improvement in our humanity. Putting feeling out of the question, we may naturally ask what there is about gout which renders it so intensely, and so pre-eminently comic? Small-pox, fevers, and broken limbs are never served up to amuse an audience, although the whole put together can scarcely equal the pain and helplessness represented by gout. The pleasures of the table are falsely fathered with the disease, although many more desperate cases come from workhouses than from palaces. Gatherers of comic material have either advanced too far in the province of disease, or have not penetrated far enough. There may be a wide, a fruitful, and a comparatively untouched field yet open to them, for mirth-provoking purposes. Rheumatism has many phases that might be rendered amusing in the hands of a master. Indigestion has been largely used; but bilious fever is still virgin soil. Ague and yellow jaundice would be effective in their dramatic manifestations, and are perfectly novel to the English stage. Consumption has been well-worked on its sentimental side; but there must be a comic aspect if diligent searchers will only seek it. The plague has been represented to a British audience with very equivocal success, but the persevering dramatist should not be disheartened by a single failure. Even the gout, well-used as it is, is not entirely an over-worked mine.

Why do the leading wits of the age linger idly at the half-way houses of death, and not push on their journey to its legitimate conclusion? If disease can be made funny, why not the last scene of all?

Death is not always strutting in its dignified poses; and many men have left the world with something marvellously like an anti-climax.

UNHAPPY DOGS.

THERE is a common proverb which tells us to give a dog an ill name and hang him. We have complied with one part of the request, but not with the other. We have given the dog one of the most terrible of names—that of hydrophobia—but we have not exterminated him. Liverpool lately made itself ridiculously notorious by the massacre of some six hundred dogs, but its example has fortunately not been followed by any other important city. The dog, in spite of the fearful imputation which hangs over him, and the panic-stricken brutality of the Liverpool police, still holds his place as the most cherished companion of man. He is suspected by police authorities, and muzzled by Act of Parliament in England and France with different degrees of ingenious cruelty, but he is still the chosen friend of old and young. The children find in him a toy which perpetually renews its freshness; and mothers, as Doctor John Brown truthfully puts it, find in him a perpetual infant. He is not allowed to work—also by Act of Parliament—but he relieves his restless idleness by becoming the guardian of property. He has even survived a tax—also imposed by Act of Parliament—which is not, however, collected with very severe regularity, if he is wise enough not to bark at the tax-gatherer.

With so many excellent institutions, some of them founded for his special benefit—with a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and a Home for Lost and Starving Dogs, which has lived through all the false ridicule showered on its birth, it seems a pity that some authoritative inquiry has not been instituted before this as to the reality of what is called hydrophobia. No disease to which doctors ever gave a name has been surrounded by so many vulgar errors, and the belief in it which exists in the popular mind may be placed on the same level as a belief in witchcraft. One by one, nearly

all the supposed characteristics of the disease have been given up by medical men, and yet they are still articles of faith with the majority of the public. Nearly every week, during the occasionally hot months of summer, we are called upon to read 'another case of hydrophobia.' How many cases of this kind are reported every year it is impossible to say, but probably many hundreds, and yet the last report of the Registrar-General contains the following remarkable statement:—'There was only one death from hydrophobia in the year.' Are we to believe the official record, or the village doctors? If real cases of this kind are so rare, where do such medical men get that experience which can alone qualify them to certify that a patient dies of hydrophobia? Though the name of the disease implies a horror of water, and a horror of water is now known not to be a distinctive sign of hydrophobia, the name is still retained. Though people really suffering from this affliction—call it by what name we will—are known not to foam at the mouth, not to go on all fours like an animal, not to bark, not to fly from drink, not to be relieved if the dog recovers or is brained, as usual, by a ready butcher, all these signs are duly recorded. Whether such records are the result of a distempered imagination, a foregone conclusion, exaggerated hearsay, or careless observation, it is impossible to tell, and where so much doubt exists we may be pardoned for trusting only to science. Science tells us that a so-called mad dog does not foam at the mouth, that he is generally afflicted with a burning thirst, that his ferocity is only shown in an inclination to bite dogs, and that he is exceptionally kind to his human companions. We have even been warned to beware of excessive affection as one of the recognized signs of his approaching madness. The question of dog-madness—or rabies, as it is technically called—being caused by thirst in hot weather has been put to the test of experiment. Dogs have repeatedly been tied up in the so-called dog-days, and kept without water, but though they have died under this privation, they have shown no signs of rabies. Their martyrdom was cruel, but it has not benefited their species. The 'distemper'—a common disease with dogs, which is easily cured by a few hours' confinement in the dark—is nearly always confounded with madness. If a dog walks with his tongue out in July and August, or runs with moderate speed in a straight line, or turns round, or does almost anything except keep out of sight, he is at once proclaimed mad by the popular voice, and his brains are dashed out in a frenzy of excitement. This is not cruelty—for the dog has no

kinder friends, a little dog-fighting excepted, than the lower classes—but gross, honest ignorance. July and August are the two months of peril for the dog, because the public and the police authorities have so willed it; though it ought to be known that April, November, and December can show three cases of so-called dog-madness for one in the hottest months. While this disease is so obstinately associated in England with hot weather, it is curious that South America, the East Indies, Egypt, and Equatorial Africa should be free from hydrophobia. We leave professional medical writers to explain this evident contradiction.

It strikes us, as it must strike any impartial observer, that the dog has been far from fairly treated in this matter. There is undoubtedly a disease which attacks human beings, and which shows itself in such signs as inflammation of the windpipe, gullet, or stomach, accompanied by a choking sensation, to relieve which the patient coughs, perhaps somewhat peculiarly, and certainly desperately. This cough has been magnified into a bark, not, we are afraid, without early medical sanction; and a French writer on the subject has even tried, not very successfully, to convey a notion of it by musical notation. The attempt to connect the dog with this painful and sometimes fatal disease is too often made by questions which lead up to a foregone conclusion. If not recently bitten by a dog, he is asked if he was ever so bitten, and there are few people who could not fancy they had received such a bite at one time or another. A question like this will naturally act upon the imagination, the commonest faculty possessed by mankind, and then the hydrophobiac symptoms will probably begin. A case is recorded of a maid servant who is said to have died of the disease merely from seeing her mistress vomit while labouring under hydrophobia, and another in which a dying young man recovered when the dog which bit him was brought into the room and shown to be perfectly sane. Such cases will show what imagination may do for the growth of hydrophobia; but why should the dog be alone saddled with the responsibility of this terrible disease? If medical works are to be relied upon, a cat, a pig, a cock, a rat, a duck, and a badger, can all propagate hydrophobia; and horses, apes, camels, bullocks, bears, and monkeys are held, when rabid, to possess the same dreadful power. The knowledge of this ought to relieve the dog from some share of odium, though we should be sorry to see the other animals condemned without better evidence. The horse is comparatively safe, because he costs more money than

the dog, but even he has been accused of giving his master the glanders.

This question of hydrophobia always turns up at least once a year, to be discussed with more or less doubt and prejudice. Some little time ago 'Blackwood's Magazine' promised a series of articles on this subject. The first, evidently written to support the old foregone conclusion, was published, but the rest never appeared, being stopped, we presume, by an exhaustive reply from Mr Moy Thomas. It would have been well if the series had been continued, for the more discussion we have the better. Here is a disease of some kind which has been popularly fathered upon the dog, though nearly every creature can produce it, so we are told, except canaries and infants. We have something like authentic records to tell us that it has been caused by the bite of a man, and one case is narrated in full detail by Dr Le Dulx in the fifth volume of the 'Transactions of the Batavian Society.' The name of place and date are duly given. After stating that on the 17th of March, 1789, information was laid before the court of justice that a man named Van Vliet, 'a writer,' had stabbed himself in a fit of madness, the learned doctor continues:—

'The court proceeded to the place without delay, attended by the town-surgeon, Lombart, where they found the patient, by direction of the surgeon attending him, bound, and in strong convulsions, particularly of the eyes. The family being interrogated as to the origin of his complaint, related that, four or five days previous to the act, the patient had a quarrel with a friend, which proceeded to a furious scuffle; when his antagonist, finding himself not a match for the patient, in a moment of rage bit him in the arm. The wound was bound up in the usual way, without the least idea being entertained of the dreadful consequences which a bite, thus made, in the heat of passion, was capable of producing. Three days after this happened, the patient was attacked with fever; but still no particular regard was had to the wound. The surgeon who attended, observed that he was in a state of continued delirium; that he had a great antipathy to every kind of medicine, and, in particular, a strong aversion to water. On the fourth day, the surgeon, on entering the apartment, found him stabbing himself with a knife. With some difficulty they seized and bound him down upon a sofa. On the town surgeon being sent for, he offered him a spoonful of water, which he refused; but on being told it was *gin*, he endeavoured with great difficulty to swallow it. When a glass of water was presented to him, the most ghastly

spasmodic convulsions were observable in his face, and over his whole body, accompanied with such a degree of terror, that he exclaimed, "*Water, oh! Jesus, have mercy on me!*" His terror increased on wiping his bloody hands with a wet napkin, when, in convulsive agonies, he called out, "*Oh! God, water!*" Perceiving clearly that hydrophobia had supervened from the bite received in anger, we resolved to treat him accordingly; but he died in the afternoon of the same day.'

We are also told that this disease may be produced by eating beech-nuts. If beech-nuts will play us false like this, what shall we think of truffles? When no bite of any animal can be had, and beech-nuts are out of reach, there is what is called spontaneous hydrophobia, spoken of by Mr Samuel Cooper in his 'First Laws of the Practice of Surgery.' Dr Watson, who had a long and extensive practice both in private and in the hospitals, never met with more than four cases of hydrophobia, one of which arose from the bite of a cat, and another from the slightest bite of a sane terrier.

The great John Hunter tells of a case he had heard of, where 'twenty-one persons were bitten by a mad dog,' only one of whom became affected, 'and he,' as the doctor sneeringly remarks, was 'not the first nor the last, nor the most lacerated.' He adds, 'Little more of this disease is known than was known a thousand years back; and if any medicine had been given to these people we should have said we had found a specific that succeeded in curing twenty out of the twenty-one.'

Mr Youatt, the well-known writer on dogs, certainly believed in hydrophobia, but his experience hardly sustains the popular opinion as to the fatal and communicative character of rabies. He says:— 'My hands have been repeatedly covered with the foam of rabid dogs, and I have been bitten by them much oftener than I liked.'

When an animal so faithful and necessary to man as the dog is found labouring under a murderous imputation, which is based upon such very slender and conflicting evidence, it is surely only just and humane to call for a calm and scientific inquiry. We have left off burning witches, but we have still a vast capacity for superstition, and perhaps this belief in dog-madness and its consequences may be equally degrading.

NO THOROUGHFARE.

THE partial abolition of all toll-gates within five miles of London ought to draw attention to a defect in our means of internal communication which requires a speedy remedy. The railway undertakings which have been carried out almost remorselessly within the last five or six years, the Bills for new sub-ways and iron highways that are now before Parliament, remove any delicacy which we might ever have felt about speaking out on this subject. We not only want to see every toll-gate swept away which now stands within five miles of London, or even in a far broader area, but we should like to welcome a bold, well-considered measure that would do away with every private barrier. Whether the obstruction be a floriated iron-gate in charge of a liveried porter, which attempts to filter the traffic to and from a particular square; whether it is a row of unsightly posts, like uneven teeth, which dam out a few costermongers' barrows in a back street of the suburbs; whether it is a forlorn 'halfpenny hatch' which rots in pernicious idleness in the middle of some withered highway, or a swinging-gate which is a popular plaything for the children of a crowded neighbourhood—no matter what shape it takes, or to whom it belongs, we wish to see it rooted out as speedily as possible. We have no more ill-will against the Duke of Bedford or the Marquis of Westminster in this matter, than we have against some unknown Mr Jones or Jenkins who may be the holder of a London cloister. We know the value of peace and quietness as fully as the hero of a certain well-known farce; we know how charming and snug it is to live in a settlement, which is as much like the cathedral square of a remote city as bolts and bars can make it, although pitched in the very heart of the metropolis. We are not blind to the selfish advantages which may thus be enjoyed by a select few, to the manifest inconvenience of the vulgar many. We have long felt, however, that a city is not made for one man, or one body of men, but for everybody whose lot may be cast in it. In

much of our recent legislation this truth has been half recognized, but only in that petty way which shows either ignorance or timidity. No one has been bold enough to propose the removal of these numerous barriers, on the ground that the owners were maintaining them in defiance of all good citizenship and public morals. Attempts have been made, from time to time, to get rid of one or two of these obstructive gates, but nothing like a general movement with fixed principles has been organized. We have a recollection of something like a parochial riot about the barrier at the end of Devonshire Place, but the local Rebeccas were defeated by the strong arm of possession. Other points have been attacked in these London barricades, but by troops who had neither leaders, force, nor sustaining power.

It will not be necessary, in order to prove that we are not fighting with shadows, to give a detailed list of London streets which are kept under lock and key by their private owners. Every Vestry—every District Board of Works within the metropolitan limits can furnish a long catalogue of these obstructions. A locked-up meadow, or a private road, may be tolerated at the side of a country highway, or even in a country village, but certainly not in the midst of three millions of busy people. It wants no quotations from great authorities, the acknowledged sources of political wisdom, to prove that the rights of property will not morally sustain such an occupancy. If we object to the stand-and-deliver system of collecting public tolls, how much more strongly must we object to a power which shuts a public door in our face, and will only open it in accordance with its own peculiar fancies? The uncertainty as to the hours when these barriers may be open or may be closed, is a fruitful source of annoyance to Londoners and their visitors. If the owners closed them altogether, they could hardly injure the public more than they do by admitting a few vehicles and pedestrians at very uncertain specified periods.

This baronial mode of dealing with large tracts of metropolitan ground that ought, by their position, to be thoroughfares, may seem very grand and feudal to many people, who affect to worship the barbarous and the mediæval. We respect the rights of property fully as much as these adorers of the past, but we see a right of property which they are probably blind to. This right is the ancient right of way—the power to command the use at all seasons and at all hours of anything like a road or pathway from one part of the City to another. Nothing in the shape of landed proprietorship, private convenience, or the desire to preserve unnatural solitudes within a gun-shot of

Temple Bar, ought to stand in the way of this greater right and convenience. When bills like the one which empowered the formation of the Underground Railway were brought before the House of Commons for its sanction, every personal and private objection was overruled for the sake of the general public. When the railway was being constructed, during a painful and never-to-be-forgotten period of three years, its legalized nuisances were tolerated for the sake of the public benefit. When several lunatics and a score of bankrupts were made, and a vast amount of house property was undermined and depreciated, all these injuries were tolerated for the sake of the public benefit. In the face of this and similar undertakings, where nothing has been allowed to interfere with a work which is thought to be for the public good, we should like to know why any hesitation should be shown in dealing with our London barriers. Powers, of course, must be got from Parliament, and the vigorous opposition of many landowners and property-champions will probably have to be encountered; but if compensation were freely and liberally offered, much of this opposition would either be withdrawn, or deprived of its strength by the force of public opinion. This question, like the abolition of tolls question, must not be looked at in a penny-wise manner. As a general metropolitan tax will be the only equitable financial substitute for tolls to pay for the maintenance of the public highways, so a similar tax ought to furnish the funds for this purchase of thoroughfares. This task is an important part of that greater work which is necessary for the improvement of London, and if undertaken in an earnest spirit it will not be merely tilting at windmills.

NUISANCES.

AM I to become the sport of my nerves? Am I to be a slave to my senses of sight, smell, and hearing? Or am I to stand up against the encroaching power of these four secondary parts of my mental and physical organization, and to say boldly, I will acknowledge no government but that of my head and my heart? Am I to try everything by the eternal standard

of self—the everlasting me—and to ignore all that is done by my fellow-creatures, unless it happens to harmonize with my own petty tastes and feelings? Who am I, what am I, that I should set myself up as the judge of what is correct and agreeable—the putter-down and mover-on of what is improper, or repugnant to my standard of taste? What is my standard of taste? Is it something infallible—something that may be trusted under every change of circumstances, every variation of temperature, every condition of bodily feeling, or is it not rather the slave of all these things, a compound of physical weakness and mental prejudice? What right have I, a poor, weak, erring, insignificant atom upon the great earth, to sit in judgment upon anything, and call it a positive nuisance? A floor-cloth manufactory—is that a nuisance? Not absolutely or altogether so. The smell of the paint acts differently upon different constitutions; and although I cannot say that it excites in me any very agreeable sensation, I know that an open gas-pipe does, and I have a right, therefore, to assume that all men are not disgusted with a floor-cloth manufactory. Anyway, there are the work-people and their families—and no mean number of these things are to be settled by majorities—who would be sorry to hear that the nuisance which provides them with bread was put down according to Act of Parliament.

The fat man, with the broad, opaque back, who always sits before me in a theatre, and interferes with my personal comfort in a public conveyance, becomes at times such an intolerable nuisance, that if I were to give way to the savage impulses of my nature, I should smite him down with the first destructive instrument at hand. A little reflection, a little communion with my better humanity, convinces me, however, that he is a far greater nuisance to himself than he is to those around him, and that I am not altogether guiltless of various little acts of an annoying character by which I irritate him, and deprive myself of the pure right of complaint. At the theatre, my sharp, attenuated knees painfully penetrate his yielding back; and in the omnibus, the hard, keen angles of my pocket-book, or my snuff-box, find a resting-place in the soft substance of his incompressible sides. As I see him weltering in perspiring agony in the boiling caldron of a crowded, unventilated stage-pit—in the close, musty depths of a public vehicle—or waddling as the butt and football of every hurrying passenger on the Queen's highway—my antagonism is disarmed, and I pass him tenderly, as I should one who was blind.

Slow people in the streets are nuisances, especially the two young

ladies and their dowager-mamma, who will walk three abreast with a snail-like movement almost imperceptible to the naked eye. If I gave way to my feelings as I hasten to attain a given point by a certain time, I should unceremoniously break the self-complacent line of the fair promenaders, and scatter them on each side to the gutter and the wall; but a glance backward at the indignant faces of the persons whom I have rudely passed, convinces me that my haste is a greater nuisance to society at large, than the calm tardiness of the three ladies who form an elegant barrier across the footway.

The street-vendor of hardware, who stands at my area-railings with a couple of tea-trays under his arm, which it is a gross, unpardonable insult to my taste to suppose that, under any circumstances, I shall buy, appears a thorough nuisance to my one-sided vision, when he will not move on, under repeated hostile signs, which I make to him from behind the blind of my dining-room window. But if I have the heart, or take the trouble to look at the other side of this nuisance—the side that is not immediately presented to my sight—I shall see, in all probability, an anxious, struggling, itinerant trader, with a small capital, moving from house to house, in search of a humble living for the family dependent upon him. As he passes up one hard, unsympathizing street, and down another, meeting with nothing but closed doors, and the eternal hasty shake of the frowning head, it may be that, in his melancholy reflections, society appears to be a greater nuisance to him than he ever appears to be to society. If I changed places with him this instant, should I conduct myself with more propriety of demeanour? should I carefully draw the line at that nice point where praiseworthy perseverance ends, and troublesome impertinence begins, with the ever-increasing cry for bread, bread, bread, ringing unceasingly in my ears?

Let any man whose nervous system is cultivated to the highest pitch of sensitiveness, try to see in the noisy huckster of the streets a fellow-labourer, whose lot has fallen upon more stony ground, and he will hear from that moment a plaintive music in the most uncouth sounds that ever issued from the lips of street-trader or street-minstrel. There will be an end to those fretful starts of impatience when the sharp, short, quick beats of the Indian tom-tom burst upon the ear, and he will learn to look with pity upon the poor copper-coloured performer who chants his wild lay in calico and a March wind. Rude and unmusical the performance may be, but not more so than Professor Gamma's illustrations of Greek harmony, to which the learned

flock in crowds, and in the crabbed, four-note combinations of which they affect to discover a simple melody that is not altogether unpleasing to the ear. I have had my horror of the oriental nuisance long ago, but it fled before a day-dream picture of myself in Singapore—the temperature lowered to freezing-point, the European population rooted out, and I singing, to an unsympathizing populace, for my daily food and my nightly bed, one of the wild songs of my native land.

The organ nuisance, I must say, never annoyed me, because I am not a learned and indefatigable man, like my neighbour, Dr M'Verbose, who is preparing his great work upon the currency for a not over-expectant public. He is continually calling in the assistance of the Vandal policeman to stop the *Casta Diva* abruptly in the middle, because the subtle theories of a man who is about to open up upon paper unbounded supplies of paper-wealth to pacify the insatiable hunger of the directors of a delusive commerce, cannot be properly worked out while an Italian scena is being performed upon a barrel-organ under the window, with a fluto-harmonicon accompaniment. A nuisance, no doubt, to Dr M'Verbose is that poor, pinched, dirty-faced, slouched-hatted, idiotic, smiling, nodding, mechanically-musical emigrant from the sweet south; but a far greater nuisance to a large circle is the learned doctor—even before his great work is published—without having the excuse of the Italian, that he is fighting for a living. The nuisance of the organ-player begins and ends in himself, but the nuisance of Dr M'Verbose and his theories will become multiplied in the persons of a hundred active disciples. As for me, I am content to stop for a time the working of the mental mill, and look out into the falling snow, to dream—as I listen to the melodies of the Italian composer—of a land where the people live in contented idleness under the sun, where the street-minstrel is welcomed by young and old, and not moved on by every uncongenial hermit who dwells in the social isolation of eight rooms and a kitchen.

In nothing are men so inconsistent as in their horror of nuisances, the most sensitive being usually the greatest offenders. The hardened snuff-taker, who sneezes with the roar of a wild beast in the middle of a solemn service, will leap off his chair at the sound of a postman's knock; and the man whose nerves are irritated by the ringing of church-bells, will play complacently upon the bagpipes in the bosom of his family.

STANDING ON TIPTOE.

ONE of the greatest faults and weaknesses of all classes who are a few steps above the lowest members of society, is a constant determination to stand on tiptoe. The wallowing character of the lower orders is bad enough—that wretched standard of living which produces Bethnal Green scandals and discussions about labourers' cottages; but the paltry ambition which is always striving to appear something which it is not, is infinitely worse. All the stretching of the neck, and the standing on tiptoe, by which each man is struggling to look as if he topped his equals and was level with his superiors, never probably gave birth to one of those examples of genuine rising in the world which are now held up as models for the young to copy. All that such a diseased wish to seem higher without the trouble of mounting has ever produced for society, has been a plentiful crop of meanness and falsehood. It has led to endless debt and embarrassment, and endless mortification and shame. In some of its aspects it may be simply ridiculous, but in most of them it is sad and degrading. It breeds a race of impostors who, in their turn, breed another race of impostors. It encourages the manufacture of make-believe articles which are the household gods of such impostors. It is the patron of lath, plaster, electro-plate, and veneer; of everything which hides its hollowness under a brilliant exterior. It demands false pearls—false diamonds—false pictures—false bronzes—and, of course, they are supplied. It employs workmen only to demoralize them. It pays for showy 'accomplishments' in preference to solid attainments, and causes the pupil to despise his master—the master to despise his pupil.

As this determination to stand on tiptoe is shown in nearly every requirement of life, it naturally has its influence on the adornment of the person. The stander-on-tiptoe, when he starts to choose his tailor, has two courses before him. Either he can go to the headquarters of that fashion which he is so desirous of imitating, and deck

himself out on the long-credit system, or he can seek one of those numerous establishments where slop copies of the highest style are supplied at the lowest ready-money cost. The latter course, if adopted, will at least prove that the stander-on-tiptoe means to pay his way, and if he were honestly searching for true cheapness, his conduct would be blameless.

It is not easy to exaggerate the importance of really cheap dress, in its influence on the social and political welfare of the human race. When clothing was fantastic and dear, the distinctions between class and class were too broadly marked, servility was fostered, and liberty was checked. The abolition of hair-powder and silk-stockings was worth a dozen reform bills, and the advent of the cheap tailor was the dawning of something like democratic equality. The sixteen-shilling trouser was the true leveller of society, the destroyer of the pretensions of mere wealth, the nourisher of true claims to distinction. It finished the work which had been successfully begun years before; it deprived the moneyed lounger of one coarse mark of his grandeur; it drew Whitechapel and Piccadilly more closely together than they had ever been drawn before; it realized some of the points of the much dreaded charter, and it effectually dispelled the last lingering belief in the existence of persons of quality.

Wholesome emancipation, however, from the tyranny of broadcloth and old prices is one thing, but a slavish worship of that cheapness which is the result of false appearances, is another. Cheap clothing ceases to be desirable when it ceases to be honest, and those who are led away by the temptation of moderate prices to patronize the many 'shams' invented by tailors and hosiers, are not advancing, but going backwards. If the signs of the shop-windows are to be taken as signs of the times, we grieve to say that there is too much evidence of a bare-faced degeneracy in clothing. The paper-collar is not only rampant, but a variety of contrivances—all bearing a close affinity to that abomination of our younger days, the scouted and satirized 'dickey'—are now exhibited with the most shameless effrontery and shirt-frontery. That retiring modesty which a bygone generation of shop-keepers displayed in these matters, has not descended to their successors. No attempt is made to conceal the nature of these shams—they are not shown, like contraband cigars or fireworks, in a dark closet or back-parlour, but are ostentatiously thrust under our noses in the most populous thoroughfares. They are not even apologized for as makeshifts. The searching eye of the satirist

or the caricaturist appears not to be dreaded, and the idea is suggested that these guardians of society have been bribed to remain silent. Anyway, contrivances are now quietly accepted which thirty or forty years ago would have been scouted with disdain—their object being the adornment of that modern production, the cheap 'swell.' There was a time, almost within the memory of young men, when a costume that would pass muster on the sunny side of Regent Street could not be had for anything less than a five-pound note. At that period the cheap swell was compelled to patronize the second-hand clothing shop, and to adorn himself in those cast-off raiments of gentility which are now exported to the colonies. He went to Monmouth Street for his boots, and to Holywell Street for his garments; but his linen, what little he had, was really linen—not some coarse textile fabric with a paper-back, or paper without an atom of textile surface. In those days he could hardly avoid having one confidante who knew the weak point in his armour—who regarded him with the same feeling with which valets are supposed to regard their hero-masters. This was his laundress. Now, however, he has no such confidante, and is the sole depository of his own secret. He buys his paper-collar and his paper adjuncts for a trifle, wears them for three days or a week, according to his taste and means, and then destroys them without any prying witnesses.

The much abused 'dickey' of the past was only an imposition in size—its material was as honest as the shirt it represented. The tolerated 'dickey' of the present is an imposition both in size and material. It professes to be linen, but is only a sheet of note-paper; it professes to be a full-sized shirt, and is not as large as a trowel. The old 'dickey' could boast of a certain amplitude which entitled it to respect; the new 'dickey,' placed on a table, would hardly cover a cheese-plate. Without a half-clerical waistcoat, buttoning nearly to the throat, the pretensions of the latter would be exposed in an instant.

The demand for garments which are not what they seem has hitherto been confined to under-clothing, but now it has gained courage and has reached the surface. A waistcoat has been invented to meet this demand, which is all front and no back, and which costs little more than one half of the real substantial article. Its popularity has doubtless been very large during the summer, and this will encourage the inventors to show their ingenuity still further. It is not for us to suggest how the coat and trousers may be operated upon so as to

produce the greatest amount of effect with the greatest amount of deception. Both have had their material adulterated as much as possible with 'shoddy' and cotton, and it now only remains for skilful operators to tamper with their forms. The cheap 'swell' can now be fitted out gorgeously—including jewellery—for two pounds, sterling; in another twelvemonth he may be equally well arrayed for half the money. We are no foes to that cheapness which is the result of improved manufacture—a really healthy feature of the hour—but to that cheapness which only represents the worth of a make-believe production.

The stander-on-tiptoe in dress and living has a baneful influence on nearly everything around him. His house or 'villa'—as he calls it—generally reflects his character, and puts on a deceptive front, and its neighbourhood soon becomes corrupted by the aspect of such houses. A faded collection of dwellings that have 'seen better days' is usually selected as a picture of wretchedness, but this wretchedness is far exceeded by a locality standing on tiptoe. A pretentious suburb that has not the courage to appear in its true colours—and London is surrounded by many such suburbs—is surely a most pitiable spectacle to look upon. There is no need to weaken this fact with a host of flippant 'illustrations.' It excites the contempt of all lookers-on, not for what it really is, but for what it affects to be. Those who live in it, and have helped to make it what it is, must despise their own work, as they must despise themselves, when they reflect on the nature of their masks, and their wretched ambition. The stander-on-tiptoe—the wearer of false fronts—can hardly preserve his self-respect, even when he succeeds, as he often does, in avoiding detection.

UMBRELLAS.

SITTING at my chamber window watching the leaping raindrops springing from the swollen puddles—watching the steamy-windowed omnibus with its stooping, shiny-caped driver and independent, mournful, head-shaking conductor—watching the clean-washed pavement smoking over the bake-

house ovens—watching the rolling glossy cabs and the struggling, soaked, and weather-beaten foot-passengers—is it to be marvelled at that my thoughts linger upon umbrellas? Amongst the dwellers in this great city—not that few who look upon their fellow-creatures from the glowing interior of the yellow chariot or the compact brougham, but that many to whom even the hack-cab is a rare luxury, and the omnibus an uncertain convenience—this humble instrument is cherished as a street god—a companion—a something to hold silent communion with—an appendage which, like a dog or a walking-stick, is modified by the character of its owner, while it becomes, at the same time, part of his system, exerting an influence over him equal to what it receives. Solitary men who take long constitutional walks to the commons round London, or loiter home in the cool of the evening from quiet offices under Government, carry umbrellas as companions, and not as instruments to protect them from the rain. The old play-goer, whose memory extends over the traditions of fifty years, who can tell how many waistcoats every actor used to take off who has played the first grave-digger in Hamlet for the last half-century, fights his way to his familiar seat in the pit—always in the pit—accompanied by an umbrella of substantial dimensions, upon which he leans in deep attention, sucking the handle as he mutters to it his opinions of the performance. His umbrella has been his constant companion all these years; and although change and decay have come to it, as to its master, in the common course of things, a new covering confers upon it every now and then the gift of perpetual youth, while the old play-goer sinks gradually without any such power of restoration.

Setting aside the dry utilitarian, who carries his umbrella as he would a macintosh, or an oilskin suit—for use, and nothing more—there is a number of men whom you may identify by their umbrellas, as you may identify others by their watches, their watch-seals, or their snuff-boxes.

There is my nervous friend, my timid friend, my friend who is sadly wanting in self-possession. He enters my chambers silently in soppy goloshes on a rainy day, with a dripping abomination which he will not put in the place appointed for the reception of umbrellas. He brings it through the mass of horrified clerks into my best official room; he places it against the wall, but before he can commence his business, the ill-constructed nuisance opens with a burst and a splutter, and falls helplessly in the little pool which it has deposited on the

carpet. He picks it up, and places it once more hurriedly yet tenderly against the wall; but it still persists in falling on the floor, with a grating noise against the wainscot. Again my nervous friend puts it in a position of safety, and it is not until he has again settled down in a chair, to return to the object of his visit, that he discovers a valuable piece of polished furniture likely to be seriously injured by the close companionship of the dripping abomination. By the time that he has finally determined to his satisfaction that the only place for a wet umbrella in such a room is inside the fender, a smell of burning discomposes him once more, and his mind is rendered totally unfit to entertain business for the day.

Then there is my forgetful friend, my friend with the weak memory, my friend who can never tell exactly whether he has lost his ring, or whether he has left it on his dressing-table. He is constantly haunted by the idea that he has left an umbrella somewhere. When you think you have got rid of him for the day, his familiar voice is heard in the outer room, and his head is thrust in at the inner door, asking in familiar tones the familiar question, 'Did I leave an umbrella behind me just now?' Then comes the production of every umbrella in the place for him to examine carefully, and endeavour, if possible, to identify the lost one. Then comes his not very graphic description of his umbrella; its peculiarities of appearance, especially its very curious and striking handle; and his very lengthy and vague account of the places he had visited that day, and the most likely shop, club-house, or vehicle in which he had left it. I meet him sometimes full in the street, and I see him stop suddenly, hesitate, scratch his chin, and then walk a short distance back in an undecided manner; the suspicion having just crossed his mind that he has lost his umbrella. When my forgetful friend pays me another visit, after the trouble that he put me to in searching for a phantom of his brain, I am amused by his quiet statement that the supposed lost umbrella was resting calmly at home in its accustomed corner, covered with the idle dust of many weeks' inactivity. All men have their uses: and I fully believe that the mission of my forgetful friend, and others of his class, is to increase the scanty salaries of cabmen by providing them with a constant supply of their regular and rightful perquisites—lost umbrellas.

Then there is my extremely neat and buckish friend, my friend who has converted the umbrella into one of the leading elegancies of life. His protector from the rain is not a half-collapsed balloon—oh

no!—it is a walking-stick, lightly wrapped in silk. And such a walking-stick! made of shining partridge cane, with a gold tassel-hole, an onyx-knobbed handle, gold-mounted, and covered with bright-green silk—altogether, a highly artistic production. It is a pleasant sight to see my neat and buckish friend in a very clean omnibus, with his patent boots, and his tightly gloved hands placidly clasped across the elegant handle of his umbrella, which he holds between his knees. Compare his almost tame refinement and gentleness with the coarse roughness of his opposite neighbour, from the country, who looks upon the umbrella as a part of the serious business of life—a thing not to be trifled with, or embroidered with anything like foppery. My rural friend's protector from the rain might have been constructed from the sails of an old coal barge, so rough and weather-beaten is it, stained with mud and clay collected in tramping up that four-mile country lane which leads from the village to the railway station. The stick is like a small mast, surmounted by a brown knob as large as an orange, upon which are clasped two fat, red speckled hands with short, brown, walnut-picking looking nails. What a wide impassable gulf there is between my rural friend and my buckish friend,—and between their attendant umbrellas!

Then there is my puffy, irascible friend, my friend with the fat red face and the small pig's eyes, but, more particularly, with the substantial well-to-do looking umbrella, which is, at one and the same time, a protection to its owner and an implement of warfare against the whole world besides. Vagrant dogs look at it with knowing horror; and jaunty, impudent errand-boys become respectable within the magic circle of its action. Many a time has it come down upon the back of the offending quadruped and the shielding basket of the impertinent butcher's boy. Usually it is carried under the arm of its owner, at an angle of elevation troublesome, if not dangerous, to the passers-by. When my puffy friend enters an omnibus, he carries his umbrella before him, like a warrior charging a fortress, to the great discomfort of the occupants. If it is wet he puts it in the way of his companions; if it is dry he strikes the unfortunate conductor so forcibly with it across the wrist, when any person wishes to alight, that the victim of imperfect mechanical arrangements looks seriously to see if any bones are broken. Remonstrance with my irascible friend only produces in him such an appearance of apoplexy, that it is a charity to desist from further complaint.

Then there is my aged friend, my Corinthian friend—my friend

who is not aware of any change in manners and costume since Tom and Jerry were rollicking boys upon town, and the finest gentleman in Europe sat upon the throne of England. My Corinthian friend is not aware that a long frock-coat with fur collar and lappets, and a low-crowned, broad-topped, curly-rimmed hat, are rather behind the style of the present day; or, if he has the slightest suspicion of the fact, he waits patiently in the full belief that the giddy, fickle world will gladly come back to the old real fashion in due time. His umbrella is made after a pattern that must have descended direct from Jonas Hanway, who is said to have been the bold introducer of these defenders from rain, towards the middle of the last century. The umbrella of my Corinthian friend is baggy from the ferule upwards, green in colour, edged with white, cotton in material, tightened in towards the top with a great brass ring (like the short-waisted ladies of the period), bamboo-sticked, and surmounted with a large ivory clenched hand. In a corner of the coffee-room, where my Corinthian friend takes his ease, it stands in a defiant attitude, seeming to shake its fist at any of the company who dare to be more modern than its master. In contrast to this umbrella stands another, belonging to an equally antique owner, the meekness of which has a strange fascination in my eyes. It is green and baggy, like its companion; but instead of the defiant clasped fist, it has a bird-beaked handle of the mildest aspect, the brass hole for the tassel (which is not there) acting as an eye. I look at it until I fancy it is alive, and I am almost betrayed into the absurdity of uttering some audible term of endearment suitable to a bird.

Then there is my sturdy, independent, old lady friend, who, firmly fastened underneath an umbrella of gig proportions, pays what I may call a periodical visitation to the City, to see her stockbroker, or receive her dividends. I call her visit a visitation, because (supposing the day to be wet) her course is marked by a crowd of indignant foot-passengers scattered right and left along the line of her progress. Some make loud remonstrance with their tongues, while others, I am sorry to say, when the first attack of astonishment is over, attempt to rally and strike the offending stockholder to the ground. Regardless of abuse, regardless of blows, the single-minded old lady pushes on her way through the crowded citizens, who are compelled to fall back as she advances, strong in the strength of an implement that was made for rougher work. In the management of the umbrella she fairly represents the general body of walking ladies, and there has been no hope

of her ever riding in a public vehicle, since that fatal day when the evil genius of an omnibus-conductor prompted him to overcharge her sixpence sterling.

Sometimes, flitting across Leicester Square and suddenly disappearing in one of the murky streets of Soho, I fancy I have seen the purple pickled-cabbage coloured parapluie of the French grisette; and I know that I have seen the light, bright-blue umbrella of a boulevard exquisite, temporarily exiled from his native land. Sometimes I fancy when I see a gentlemanly man entering a cab with a very shabby umbrella, that he must have borrowed it at night to go home from a party, when no conveyance was to be had; and that it proved to be such a disgraceful spectacle, when exposed to the light of day, that he is compelled to hire a carriage to return it to the owner. I have suffered—oh, how I have suffered!—from the joke about the best umbrellas always going first. Whether I am destined to be more unfortunate than my fellow-creatures I cannot tell; but I never venture out, either in public or private circles, without having that mouldy pleasantry dinned into my ear. I have sometimes weakly taken the Vicar of Wakefield's advice, and endeavoured to rid myself of troublesome acquaintances, by lending them umbrellas, bought for the purpose in Tottenham Court Road on a Saturday night, and warranted sound, at a shilling a-piece. I have, in all such experiments, been miserably deceived; the umbrellas, it is true, do not return, but the acquaintances invariably do.

In my wanderings about town, my eyes have been once, and once only, regaled with the sight of a real drover picking his way gingerly through the mud, as he guided his sheep to their destined slaughter-house, and holding an umbrella over his head to protect him from the rain. He must have been a gentleman who had seen better days, or a descendant of the Gentle Shepherd.

Long have I watched for, but never have I seen, a real salt-water sailor with an umbrella. Many things that pertain solely to the earth he buys, but never an umbrella. I have seen naval men occasionally with such things, but they have been stout, respectable, retired skippers, who have saved money, and gone into the ship-chandler line.

Sometimes, as I watch the clerks wending homewards from the City, I fancy that I can tell from their umbrellas more than anything else—which are the married men and which the single ones; which the free, unfettered young loungers about town, and which the struggling fathers of families. Sometimes, on a wet night, after

being dazzled with the gorgeous pageantry of a theatrical spectacle, I have a strange fancy for wandering round to that dingy back street, where the stage-door is always situated, and under the dilapidated umbrella of some thin, meek, shivering, hurrying man trying to trace the proud lineaments of that stern monarch, who, a few minutes before, had lorded it magnificently over his fellow-creatures.

Sometimes, when I pay a morning visit at the family mansion of Mr Midas (late of the Stock Exchange), I find an old rotten pair of goloshes, and a frail, handless umbrella, standing in the hall. They belong to a poor widow who walks miles in the wet to teach the young ladies music. Once she was waited upon herself, before her husband (Mr Midas's late partner) failed, and shot himself one morning in his bed-room. I have never seen her face; but I have often seen her umbrella's, and it tells her story.

FETISHES AT HOME.

I THINK, if my memory serves me rightly, that in some parts of Africa—no matter where—there exists, or did exist, a curious tribe of people whom we, in our superior wisdom, consider heathen fanatics, and whom we, in our superior language, term fetish worshippers. I am not going, in this paper, and especially in this book, to enter upon a short history of creeds and persuasions—to hold the balance between east, west, north, and south; to say which is the most preferable or the least repulsive form of worship, to discuss the doctrine of symbols, or to propose any plan for the spiritual amelioration of the untutored savage. I am merely about to describe a term, perhaps not generally understood, for the reason that I am going to apply it to many things in my own country, and to many persons amongst my own countrymen.

These curious people, then, the fetish worshippers, are in the habit of attaching an extraordinary importance, if not a superstitious veneration, to articles of the most common-place and homely description. A piece of looking-glass, an old tobacco-pipe, or a dirty

blacking-bottle, left, possibly, by some artful sailor in exchange for a bargeful of native fruits, becomes the household god—the idol—the fetish of its simple possessor, to be defended with his life, to be preserved religiously under every vicissitude of fortune. If any visitor to the wigwam of that untutored savage should break, destroy, or otherwise damage that household god, or fetish, then is there war from that moment between the two men. If the visitor or the visitee be of sufficient importance in his own country to raise a general tumult, then is the quarrel taken up by the whole tribes of the respective men; and dwellers afar off on the banks of one of the mighty native rivers know that somewhere in the land there is war to the knife, when they rise of a morning and find the deep waters rushing by coloured with human blood.

I am not, of course, prepared to go so far as to attempt a comparison in every particular between these fetish worshippers of barbarism and the fetish worshippers of civilization, who exist in fruitful abundance around me. The wholesome restraining provisions of a somewhat severe criminal law have not been without their effect in curbing the natural impulses of my countrymen. I fancy that I have noticed a savage glare in the eye of my Lady Poodlecraft when I have trodden upon the delicate toes of her Italian fetish greyhound, and a fierce grinding of the false teeth of old Miss Paroquet when I have ousted her favourite fetish cat from his comfortable seat upon the hearth-rug; and I cannot help thinking that these passive exhibitions of anger would have developed into something like active barbarian mischief but for the calm and refining influence of education, and the knowledge that there was a police-station round the corner with Newgate looming in the distance.

Not less dangerous, but for these restraints, would be my middle-aged, retired tradesman, fetish worshipper, who lives in a fetish villa protected by high walls, spring-guns, broken glass, iron spikes, and other civilized fortifications of domestic privacy. If there is any point about his fetish that he worships more than another, it is the gravel-walk, clean, tight, firm, and swept like a carpet, leading from the gateway to the dwelling-house door. Twice has he been fined two pounds and costs before a local magistrate (the last time with a caution from the bench) for violently assaulting a butcher and a baker who dared to desecrate his fetish pathway by leaving their heavy footprints in the yielding gravel. Another fetish connected with his habitation is the grass-plot before the windows; and if any bold man

wishes to try to the utmost the strength of educational and legal bonds, in checking the natural barbarian impulses that smoulder within the breast of this civilized worshipper, let him trample upon this piece of sacred verdure, and he shall find it like stamping upon the tail of a slumbering crocodile.

Another fetish worshipper of the same class is Miss Soapdragon, a paragon of cleanliness. Her fetishes are a spotless doorstep, an unsoiled passage, and virgin whity-brown painted wainscoting as pure as marble. Leave a muddy footprint upon the door-step or the floor-cloth, or the mark of a black kid glove of imperfect dye near the handle of the dining-room door, and bid adieu for ever to thy old and faithful friend, poor Soapdragon of the Treasury, for never shalt thou see him more under his own roof. Call about the time when you know he must be trying to make himself comfortable in the only room—a sort of housekeeper's pantry—allowed by Mrs S. for general use in their rather extensive mansion, and the servant will come tripping down the pathway to the outer gate, which is always kept locked, with 'mistress's compliments, and master is not at home.' In vain you ask if anything serious can have happened to divert the usually monotonously-regular Soapdragon from the very even tenor of his way; you can get but one answer from the faithful slave of the carpet-broom and the scrubbing-brush—'mistress's compliments, and master is not at home.'

Go into any public coffee-house used by regular, respectable men, and you shall find a fetish worshipper in the person of an old customer who has become used to a particular seat and a particular corner. Go in as a stranger and place yourself quietly in what appears to be the hardest worn chair or couch in the room, and when any old gentleman enters and walks round you several times, frowning and coughing, appearing to be restless and uncomfortable, or on the verge of striking you over the head with the umbrella that he always carries, you may know the fetish worshipper, and you may know that you are seated on his regular, accustomed fetish chair. If you retain it for a certain time he will do either one of two things—leave the room with unconcealed disgust and temper, or ask you in no very bland tones to resign his fetish.

Some men of this class make fetishes of a particular omnibus, and a particular seat within that omnibus. If that omnibus be full, and that seat be occupied, they vent their wrath, sometimes upon the occupants, and sometimes upon the conductor. So well does the latter

individual know the temper of the person he has to deal with, that he will even go the length of asking a timid man, or a youthful rider, to get outside and oblige an invalid.

Sometimes a fetish is found in the shape of a pair of very old and very easy carpet slippers, and woe upon any careless servant who has inadvertently mislaid the fetish when it takes this form. No other slippers will do, be they roomy as footbaths and soft as velvet. Sometimes the fetish is a tooth-brush, sometimes a hair-brush, sometimes a particular comb. Break, mislay, or destroy these things, and the fetish worshipper becomes the fierce avenger of his outraged idols. He can think of nothing but his lost or injured fetishes, and his wrath descends in the shape of an instant dismissal of the servants who have been guilty of such sacrilegious carelessness. Sometimes the fetish is a particular hat, a particular pair of boots, a particular coat, a particular walking-stick, or a particular watch. When the fetish garments decay, in the common course of things, and become unfit for the prying scrutiny of society, then does the faithful worshipper make for them a shrine far from the curious eyes of the economical housewife, and the syren voice of the Jew clothesman in the streets, where they stand in sacred seclusion as hallowed remains of the cherished wardrobe of the past.

Sometimes the fetish is a china punch-bowl, a Wedgwood vase, a Sèvres dessert-plate, or a tea-service. If any man by accident should injure any of these fetishes, let him beware, for civilization has its modes of revenge, not less effective, because deliberate and refined, than the rude, impulsive vengeance of the despised African. Ask for the hand of the daughter of the worshipper whose fetish punch-bowl you have just destroyed, and meet with the refusal which your folly, ignorance, and carelessness so justly merit. Ask for a clerical living, or a Government berth, through the influence of the worshipper whose Wedgwood vase you have just dashed into a hundred pieces, and find that you have for ever shut yourself out from all chance of obtaining the object of your desires. Smash the Sèvres dessert-plate of your uncle, or the tea-service of your aunt, and give up at once all hopes of large legacies from either of those fruitful sources of property.

Sometimes the fetish is a small coin, a tester of a remote period; sometimes a huge picture, the pride and glory of a ducal palace. Sometimes it is a rare pamphlet, sometimes a black-letter volume, sometimes a murky engraving, with 'Rembrandt fecit' scratched across a stone or a felled tree in one of the corners. Sometimes the

fetish is a square-headed bull-dog in the neighbourhood of Lambeth, sometimes a bed of sturdy tulips in the neighbourhood of Chiswick. Sometimes the fetish takes the form of a pigeon, circling above the housetops in Bethnal Green, and then the worshipper may be seen, half-discovered on the roof of his dwelling, with a long, thin stick in his hand, watching the skimming of the sacred bird with eyes of devout admiration. If any fetish worshipper, of similar tastes, should succeed by decoys, as is not unfrequently the case, in entrapping the fetish pigeon of his brother worshipper, then is there war from that hour between the two men.

As we descend lower in the scale of society, of course we find the standard of civilization sinking in proportion; thus, the restraints which are respected in St James's are totally despised in Bethnal Green. The two fetish pigeon-worshippers, imitating unconsciously the example of the untutored savage, are unable to come to any satisfactory arrangement without the aid of blows. And so we go on, from year to year, with our little likes, our great antipathies, our little weaknesses and our little strength, our shallow doubts and our deep convictions, our virtues and our crimes; and possibly it may turn out, when the great account is at length cast up, that the petty history of one degree of latitude and longitude does not differ very materially from the petty history of another, and that there is not a wonderful difference, after all, between white and whitey-brown, and black, red, pink, olive, blue, and yellow men.

STREET MEMORIES.

IT matters not much what I am now. I may be the chairman of the Balls Pond Mining and Quartz Crushing Company (Limited); I may be the governor of the United Banks of Shetland and Tierra del Fuego, or any other incarnation of intense respectability and supreme authority; but one thing is certain—I was once a boy. If some of my City friends will condescend to throw aside that stiff mask which they

wear from nine to five, and that other equally stiff but very genteel mask which they wear to the west of Temple Bar, from five to twelve, I will take them kindly and naturally by the button-hole, and tell them, to the best of my ability, what kind of a boy I was; what I did; what I liked; and what I disliked.

I was decidedly a street-boy; and perhaps a sharp boy. I was allowed to walk about for the benefit of my health; because, when I went to school, I caught the hooping-cough, the scarlet fever, the chicken-pox, and the measles. These calamities procured me freedom of action, with a certain amount of pocket-money. I knew every street-tumbler as well as my own father. I knew the thin youth in the white leggings, who did the splits equal to any acrobat in Europe; and the stout posturer in pink leggings, who was always striking an attitude of menace towards his partner, and who threw a hand-spring, two flip-flaps, and a back-summersault without the aid of a spring-board. I knew the man with the brass balls, the rings, the doll; and the little boy who used to wriggle through the spokes of the ladder while it was being balanced on his father's chin. If any boy got a blow with the balls which were swung at the end of a rope to clear the ring, I was that boy; but, to show that I bore no malice, I used to be the first to volunteer to enter the circle when a lad was required to have his head cut off. I used to stand by the side of the man with the drum, watching the artistic touches that he gave to the instrument, and listening to the delicate light and shade which he imparted to his performance on the mouth-organ. I believe, now I have come to reflect, at a mature age, that I must have been present on the last occasion when a live donkey was balanced on the top of a ladder resting on a man's chin. All went well for a few minutes, when a slight impatient movement of the quadruped caused the ladder to incline, and the performer, after vainly trying to restore its perpendicular, was compelled to let it go, and the animal fell with a crash through a cheesemonger's window. The donkey was not killed, but the whole troupe were taken to the station-house; and a new police regulation forbade any such performance in future. An aunt of mine declared that it was a judgment upon the cheesemonger (who used to serve her) for the reckless manner in which he bought and used waste-paper, without any regard to what it had been in its bound and printed form.

I knew the group of children upon stilts, but I never took kindly to them. They were more calculated to interest those well-regulated

boys who were never allowed to see any of the sights I have mentioned, except from the safe paternal fastness of a bed-room window. But I mixed with the wild throng, learned their habits, their prospects, and their rounds, and nearly always knew the hour, the day, and the place at which to expect them. I was familiar with the street bands that played at public-house doors; I even knew their little loves and hatreds. I have seen an harmonious partnership broken up, and the piccolo and the violoncello refuse to work any longer with the bugle (there were bugles in those days) and the violin. I have even seen the bugle out by himself, doing a very good solo business in a thick marketing street like Shoreditch, on a Saturday night. I have often seen the trombone very drunk and incapable; and an old fellow with red, blown-out cheeks, extremely vain about his manner of executing the Last Rose of Summer on a cracked clarionet.

Many a time have I stood with untiring patience outside a public-house for several hours, when I saw the familiar machine standing at the door, with its drapery tucked up, waiting for the proprietor to come out after dinner flushed with beer. When a 'pitch' took place, how I used to watch the windows of the substantial houses, to see if any smiling nursemaids, with delighted children, made their appearance, backed by the paper of half-pence from the benevolent parents, without which and the general encouragement of the crowd, I knew, from long experience, no performance would take place. The fantoccini I pronounced to be a bore, a something only to be endured if nothing better was to be had. The idiotic Turk who threw up two orange-looking balls, first one and then the other, no more excited my interest than did the skeleton that danced and fell to pieces produce in me a feeling of wonder and admiration. The young lady in the short light frock and soiled stockings, who used to dance upon the slack-wire, waving first two flags, and afterwards playing upon a pair of cymbals, inspired me with almost a tender passion. I used to watch anxiously for her days of appearance, and I always felt very jealous of the man who accompanied her in the capacity of guardian and money-taker.

The showman who carried in a box upon his back, the dramas of Mazeppa and the Wild Horse, and Jonathan Bradford, was another object of interest. His entertainment was exclusive, and only to be enjoyed by the possessor of one halfpenny. I used to see it as often as I could afford it, standing on a step in front and looking through

the bull's-eye glasses. The interior was lighted up with a candle in the middle of the day, and the different highly-coloured tableaux were let down with a heavy flop by strings at the side. Mazeppa was dragged across the stage on a wooden slide; wonderful atmospheric effects were introduced at the back, by lifting a lid, and the whole was made more interesting by a running description pronounced in a thick voice by the proprietor, who was always suffering from a cold in the head through exposure to the weather. My experience out-of-doors gave a tone to my conduct at home. Mazeppa was got up inside a band-box with tolerable success; I broke a great number of plates and saucers trying to spin them on the top of walking-sticks in imitation of the juggler; and my experiments upon the bed, trying to achieve the feat of a back-summersault, were carried out to the utter destruction of the sacking. The introduction of Jim Crow as a character-song was fatal to more than one tolerable suit of clothes. I blacked my face three times a-day; I destroyed one of my father's best hats, making the crown hang down like the lid of a snuff-box; and I made ragged the sleeves and tails of a coat, and covered with patches a pair of very wearable trousers.

I was not a gluttonous boy, but constant exercise and exposure to the air had given me a good appetite, and I liked to eat. I was fairly supplied with pocket-money, and I was also lucky in finding small sums. I once found three-and-sixpence; I once found one-and-twopence; and once sixpence, a pen-knife, and a bit of sealing-wax. I was not altogether devoted to the lighter delicacies of the palate. I knew the different flavours of cheese-cakes, Banbury tarts, and three-cornered jam tartlets. I knew how much more was to be got for a penny when I bought the stale pastry from the tea-tray placed at the side of the doorway. I knew exactly how far a pennyworth of pieces would fill my cap. I knew all this; and it was not, therefore, ignorance but choice that often sent me to the more substantial viands of the cookshop. Good, greasy Yorkshire pudding was a favourite, sometimes plain, sometimes with an occasional raisin stuck at rare intervals on the surface—always on the surface. Next to this stood baked potatoes, brown and crisp; and, after this, peas-pudding, in warm and heavy lumps upon a cabbage-leaf. My regular shop used to cook twice a-day; once at twelve in the morning, and again at eight in the evening. No delicacy that I could have had at home was half so choice in my eyes as these pennyworths of pudding and potatoes, bought amidst a crowd of cabmen, carters, and coalheavers, and dirty

women receiving their dinners and suppers in yellow basins—meat, pudding, greens, potatoes, gravy, and mustard, all mixed up together.

The places that I loved to patronize most were the stalls. There was a pieman who sold kidney puddings of a most delicious flavour—at least I thought so then—and he had the field to himself for many months. But, at last, capital and enterprise came in competition with him, in the shape of a rival pieman, who professed to sell kidney puddings superior to pieman number One, at two-thirds of his price. Thereupon, pieman number One stuck up a large paper lanthorn on his staff, on which was written in sufficiently legible characters, 'The original inventor of the kidney puddings.' This had the desired effect with the majority of boys, who were very bad political economists, and liked to buy in the oldest, rather than the cheapest market. At least, I judge by myself and companions, for we stuck to the inventor nobly through his troubles, until his dastardly opponent was driven ignominiously from the field.

There were hundreds of fruit-stalls, but I never dealt with any but one, kept by an old lady, who was a widow, and wore what I afterwards learned was a widow's cap. She sold ribstone pippins, two for a penny; little red apples, several seasons old, four for a penny; hard Brazil nuts, that punished your teeth fearfully to crack them, and, sometimes, would not give in, except under the heel of the boot; she sold, occasionally, curds and whey ladled out into a saucer with a clean, broad shell; and she sold slices of sweet cocoa-nut. In the winter-time, she had a chimney-pot pan, with holes in it, full of burning charcoal, at which she warmed her hands and roasted chesnuts. She had an exceedingly almshouse-resident appearance, as she sat in an old hall-porter's leather chair, with an old bonnet that came over her face, and a well-darned brown cloak that reached to her feet. She suffered much in the cold weather, from chilblains and rheumatism; and, sometimes, her place was taken for many days by a young woman, her daughter, who did not give so much satisfaction as the old lady, by reason of her being less liberal to the customers—myself in particular.

The long winter over, the old lady came back, neat and clean as ever, and was happy and comfortable enough, knitting her worsted stockings, and serving the hungry, ever-craving juvenile public through the long summer days. In wet weather, she used to shift her stall under a gateway, by the leave of the proprietor, and in that

position defied the fury of the elements. If any one had proposed to entice me away from the widow's stall by any inducement, such as selling me four apples for a penny, instead of two, do you suppose, for a moment, that I should have gone? Certainly not. I am proud to say that certain insidious attempts of the kind were made by an adjacent Irishwoman, and that I nobly resisted them all.

An old man, who might have been the husband that the old fruit-stall keeper had lost, was another of my open-air tradespeople, that I patronized with undeviating regularity. He sold a very warm, spicy, sweet, dark, comforting mixture that he called Elder Wine. It was one penny a glass along with a rusk; and I think the proudest day of my life was, when, in consideration of my long custom, I was promoted to have two rusks for my penny instead of one, and a rather larger glass. I used to delight in taking other boys, and showing them the importance in which I was held by the Elder Wine merchant; using my influence to get them a share of my privileges; and exerting myself, as children of a larger growth exert themselves, to procure for each other opera-boxes and admissions to exclusive fêtes. The spirit of the beadle is in us from our cradles.

My sweetstuff stall-keeper was a person of less generous impulses and pliable material, which I attributed to the fact of his keeping a small gambling machine called a dolly, and to the hardening effect which the dolly had upon his mind. The toffy was delicious, the hardbake hard, as bake should be, and prodigiously full of almonds; the horehound and almond-rock were luscious in the extreme, and everything would have been delightful, but for the baneful influence of the dolly. Often have I hesitated an hour, walking backwards and forwards, as to whether I should purchase my sweet-stuff in the regular way, getting a pennyworth for a penny, or should throw the marble down the interior of the dolly, running the risk of getting a high number, or a low one, in the dish, and receiving two pennyworth for my penny, or nothing at all. The demon of gambling generally triumphed, and success was mostly on the side of the proprietor of the dolly; who, when I lost, used considerately to present me with a single brandy-ball to comfort me under my defeat.

An object of almost superstitious veneration was that splendid triumph of machinery, a first-class potato-can. Bright block-tin that you could see your face in, neatly bordered with rims of shining brass; two funnels always ejecting steam, and four lamps to light up the stately fabric by night; a box at the side to contain the butter; and

two wells in which were always baking two hundred of the finest potatoes. Is it to be wondered at that I yielded myself to the fascination of this street Crystal Palace of my childhood? Add to all this the almost superhuman manipulative dexterity of the proprietor, who picked out, divided, buttered, salted, and delivered into your hands, a couple of the smoking luxuries before the order had scarcely left your mouth; and I think I cannot be blamed for lingering with feelings of envy and admiration as I watched the rapid, skilful operation, and thought it a proper ambition to look forward to being the owner of such a machine, able to conduct it in a similar business-like manner.

An almost equal interest attached to the opening of oysters at the neighbouring fish-stall; but the operator's hands were wet, chapped, cold, and raw, and the general aspect of the whole stall, with its dirty proprietor, its pickled whelks in small saucers, its stewed eels in a large jar, and its strong-smelling flickering oil-lamp, only served to increase by contrast the air of warmth, cleanliness, comfort, and magnificence, that hovered about the palatial potato-can.

The only thing, in my eye, that ever approached the potato-can, was the fountain that gave forth ginger-beer with such inexhaustible frothy prodigality. There was less beauty and more science about this, but it only stood second in my affections. Mixed in with and variegating my line of stalls, were sound umbrellas for a shilling, walking-sticks arranged in rows against the walls, birds hopping about for sale in small green-painted cages, bright showy flowers making up for a want of root by huge globular bases of wet clay, and several large clothes-horses full of fluttering songs, both comic and sentimental, printed on the thinnest of paper, and illustrated in the rudest of styles; all of which things I, of course, bought at one time or another.

Then there were strong appeals to charity, like that of the man without legs, who sat by the side of an awful picture of a factory accident (kept down on the pavement by a couple of brickbats), in which he was represented as being hurled round by an impossible combination of machinery, and losing more blood than was ever contained in the bodies of six such sturdy cripples. Then there was a quiet, ingenious, middle-aged man, who, every day of the week (weather permitting), was constantly employed, from nine o'clock until six, writing the Lord's Prayer on the lids of very small pill-boxes. He never spoke to the little crowd, gathered round him; but

pursued his task as if he had been in the privacy of his study. He was a mystery to me, that I was never able to clear up. Close to this placid artist was an individual of a very different character, who, from morn to dewy eve, kept continually greasing the collars of willing boys with candle-ends, and immediately removing the marks with small green cakes of some composition, which he sold at a penny each; keeping up all the while, with unflagging volubility, a running eulogium upon the many virtues and uses of his article. I need not say that my jacket was greased and recleansed on the average once a day. Then there was a venerable, bearded, oriental, Turkish-looking gentleman, who stood bolt upright in the gutter selling snuff-coloured cakes of medicine called rhubarb, and who, like the Lord's Prayer penman, relied for patronage upon an impressive silence. In strong contrast to this silent gentleman were the two talkative benefactors of their species, who sold respectively corn-salve, and ginger to cure the toothache. The man with the ginger had a soft mumbling tone of voice, caused by his mouth being always well supplied with his specific remedy. He had also a curious way of working his face about, and rolling the ginger over his tongue to indicate great facility of movement, and to illustrate the truth of what he was constantly stating somewhat in these words: 'If you will apply a portion of the root to the gum when it feels troublesome, it will remove the pain, and render the mouth easy and pliable.' The proprietor of the corn-salve was much more obtrusive, and although his pronunciation was less affectedly correct than that of his companion, there was more of it, and it was more amusing. Any time between nine and dusk, he used to stand there, holding a small box of the salve in his hand, and giving utterance to the following short descriptive lecture: 'This is the unrivalled corn-salve that will cure any corn or bunion: it will cure a watery bunion! It is extracted from a 'undred different wild Arabs (meaning herbs), the colewort, the ivy, the stinging nettle, and the common snail that creeps upon the grass that grows in the fields. The snail, my friends, is of an ily, slimy, poo-erful, and penetratin' natur', and perfectly calcerated to thoroughly eradicate the disease of the corn at the second dressin'! If it does not do so I will forfeit all the stuff I've got upon the board.'

Most of these men, with all their humours and their failings, have now passed from a world in which they had a hard struggle to live. If I have recalled them from their resting-places, it has been in no unkind spirit that I have done so, but simply because I think it is

good sometimes to go back out of the din and turmoil of the present, and to try, if only vainly, to be for a few moments again a boy.

REALLY DANGEROUS CLASSES.

THERE are two classes of men eternally at war with society —criminals and careless people; but, while the law has amply provided for the punishment of the first, it finds a difficulty in dealing out retributive justice for the second. A velvet-footed, light-fingered lad approaches me stealthily from behind, and without causing me the slightest bodily pain, or a moment's mental uneasiness, he abstracts from my pocket a common handkerchief of a value ranging between eighteenpence and two-and-sixpence, and the sentence of the court is, that he be imprisoned, with hard labour, for the period of six calendar months.

A brawny, gaping, agricultural giant from the country, who supposes that the highly difficult feat of walking the London streets can be performed at once without training or experience, may run against me with the force of a battering-ram; may grind to destruction one, if not both, of my favourite patent boots; may injure for months the agonizing corns that are covered by the smiling, deceitful faces of those boots; may damage my slender Geneva watch beyond the skill of the cleverest refugee to repair; may raise into mountainous heaps the smooth, flat surface of my irreproachable Corazza shirt; may even seriously disfigure my faultless, aquiline nose; yet all this, according to the absurd usage of society, is to be balanced by the empty formulary—'I beg your pardon;' and there is to be no custody, no court, no judge, no jury, no sentence.

An old woman with imperfect eyesight, who will not pay for a servant to attend upon her, or a young lady whose passion for romantic literature is greater than her prudence, may, by the decree of a malicious fate, be found in the position of my next-door neighbour; and, because the physical weakness of the first, or the mental novel-reading-in-bed weakness of the second, causes the chamber-curtains to be set on fire, I am condemned at an uncertain time to walk the

night along the giddy parapet, like Amina in the opera; before the eyes of an assembled multitude; dressed in nothing worth mentioning, except a pair of flannel drawers, with a child in one arm and a French clock in the other. I am burnt out of my favourite dwelling and my easy-chair, my household gods are reduced to charcoal and ashes; I am transferred for many weeks to hastily chosen and inconvenient lodgings; I have to prepare a long detailed report to obtain compensation from a sulky fire-office; and the law, under all these injuries, affords me neither reward nor condolence. But if I am aroused by an attempted burglary in the dead of night, and I go down to my carefully prepared ambush to find a miserable member of the dangerous classes fixed by my artful and penetrating spikes, and worried by my faithful and powerful mastiff, I have only to spend an hour entering the charge with an energetic policeman and an affable inspector, and I am then allowed to retire to my comfortable bed to dream of the criminal offender who has injured himself more than he has injured me, and the weapons which the law has placed in my hands wherewith to punish him.

A drover of imperfect humanity—whose desire to govern the unruly bullock is not tempered by a regard for the sufferings of the animal, or a calculation of the effect of over-driving upon the quality of the meat—may, by an intemperate indulgence in the illegal stimulus of a tenpenny nail at the end of his stick, goad a harmless beast until it becomes an infuriated monster that nothing but the pole-axe will quell. This excited animal, after it has frightened my wife and her nursemaid into a pastry-cook's and fits, may overturn the perambulator containing my two favourite children. Remedy I have none against the drover for his gross act of carelessness; but, when the excited animal comes to be dealt out in the accustomed form by the unsuspecting butcher, I may summons the latter individual for selling unwholesome meat, although it may not be so offensive as the venison which stands by its side to be sold at double its price.

If the results of premeditated crime are to be weighed against the results of accidental carelessness, it is not difficult to see on which side the balance will preponderate. Put the army of thieves, rogues, and vagabonds on one side, and see how soon they will be outnumbered on the other by the thoughtless, careless people, who form what I consider the really dangerous classes. There will be eccentric travellers who come down upon you in balloons in the darkness of the night;

timid old men who, in the place of pictures, hang up fire-arms, which explode at inconvenient seasons; reckless cabmen who run over children in crowded streets as if they were mere chickens; forgetful servants who leave sharp-edged pails in dark passages; vermin exterminators who make arsenic rat-killing pies which fall in the way of schoolboys; scatterers of orange-peel upon public footways; men who write important letters without either date or address; men who never fail to miss an appointment; men who leave open razors in the way of little children; men who carry walking-sticks under their arms to destroy the eyes of the unwary; and those most trouble-giving of all the really dangerous classes, the losers of rings, trinkets, purses, and ten-pound notes. Few people who have not devoted much attention to the subject can be aware of the vast amount of annoyance and inconvenience caused by the losers to the finders of ten-pound notes.

I can imagine a man being driven mad by finding a constant succession of ten-pound notes. In the first place he is put in a painful position when he picks up the flimsy treasure-trove, exposed to the wonder, curiosity, and ignorant envy of the passer-by. That got over, he has then to perform his duty as a citizen, having, probably, to bestow much reflection upon what that duty may be. He makes a personal communication to the authorities of the Bank of England; he causes several handbills to be printed and posted at the different station-houses; and he frames an advertisement as neatly as possible, which he takes to the offices of the leading newspapers to be inserted. This is only the commencement of his trouble; for the general public are now aware of the fact that he has found a ten-pound note, and are in possession of his name and address.

No man would believe what a number of persons there are in existence belonging to nearly every grade of society, who suddenly find themselves in the position of losers of ten-pound notes. Dropping ten-pound notes within the area of a certain circle, and within the period of a certain time, seems to be a destiny as common to many of the human race as the small-pox or the measles. Setting aside the letters received from people in out-of-the-way parts of the country, who appear to have come up to London for the purpose of leaving a ten-pound note lying in the streets, the unfortunate finder of the treasure is summoned from his bed-room in the morning to an interview with several of the most impatient and the most early-rising of the personal applicants. Some are indignant that their honour is not

relied upon, and that they are not trusted with a sight of the precious document. Some are minute in their narrative particulars up to the point when the note was supposed to be lost, and then their minds become confused, and their memories a perfect blank. Some indulge in an eloquent appeal to your feelings as a husband, a brother, an uncle, or a father of a numerous family. Some are legally precise, and serve you with a wordy and formal notice not to deliver up that note to any one within a particular period, upon pain of proceedings being instituted. Some are evidently swindlers trying to collect information with a view of preparing an application. All this while, perhaps, the rightful owner does not come forward; or, if he does, he is so cunningly concealed by his own exertions, that it is impossible for you to recognize him amongst the mass of pretenders and mistaken individuals.

Early in the morning, in the middle of the day, as you are going out to keep a business appointment, or to take your wife for a walk, or while you are entertaining friends at dinner, you are subject to the intrusion of candidates for the lost property; and your domestic privacy, for the time being, is destroyed. Worried on all sides, from within and without; your temper ruffled by the circumstances in which you are placed; your wife, in a moment of weakness, accusing you of injudicious conduct in directing all the applications to your private house; your replying angrily that you know how to conduct yourself in such an emergency (as if you had been in the habit of finding ten-pound notes from your early youth); you are tempted at last to give up the property to some ungrateful—and, probably, fictitious—owner, who almost complains of the amount spent in printing, and requires to see vouchers for all the newspaper advertisements.

I can only regard careless people of this kind with anything like patience, when I reflect that the treasure which they sow broadcast sometimes falls upon fruitful ground. I am satisfied when I imagine the ten-pound note picked up by the members of a large, struggling household, who are too ignorant to make much effort in the way of advertising their good fortune. After a short and decent period of delay, the representative of value is considered to be a member of the family. The back-rent is fully paid up; the baby is treated to a new hat with a voluminous feather; the youngest boy is provided with a new pair of boots, and his old ones are half-soled and heeled; a new hat is procured for Bill, and a very good second-hand coat for the

master of the family; the little account is balanced at the chandler's shop, and a new house-broom and pail are purchased to inaugurate a new era of cleanliness; an old shawl of the mistress is properly scoured and renovated, and a certain light straw-bonnet which she had when she was married, is by the aid of cleaning and new ribbons made to look better than it ever did within the memory of man; finally, the whole troop have one grand night of enjoyment at the local theatre, and the balance of the treasure (one pound, fifteen shillings) is safely deposited in the parochial savings'-bank as a reserve for doctoring and family exigencies.

BLACK, WHITE, AND WHITEY-BROWN.

FOR years have I sought him. From the days when I started in all the hope and freshness of youth, to the present hour, when I am sick and feeble with age. I have cried aloud for him until my voice is hoarse and broken. I have looked for him until my eyes are blind with eager watching. I have listened for his footstep, to find but the echo of that which I instinctively avoid. I have consulted those who should have been my guides, my philosophers, and my friends; but their way of life had not led them across his path; their learning and experience had not taught them where to seek him. Black men they had found in numbers countless as the insects of the air: white men they had found in masses like clouds of dust, men whose whiteness was almost too dazzling for mere earthly eyes; but the whitey-brown man was more rare to them than the black swan, the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life, the blue dahlia, the lost books of Livy, or the site of the Garden of Eden.

It is hard to be told, even by the oracular voice of recognized authority, that we live in a world composed entirely of black fools and white geniuses, of black demons and white angels; in which the moderate, mediocre, happy medium, whitey-brown man is totally unknown. If we go into those numerous lesser worlds that exist within the greater, there is still the same parochial faculty for imitating the

manners and echoing the dogmas of the parent state. There is the literary world or parish, carefully guarded by its appointed beadles, who have strict instructions not to admit any stranger into the temple if he does not wear a dress of unexceptionable whiteness, scrape his feet upon the critical scraper, and wipe them well upon the critical mat. Can it be that, during all these countless years and centuries, no whitey-brown man ever knocked at the sacred gate, to be admitted with a welcome, or sent away howling with a kick? The appointed beadles have never seen a man of that peculiar tint; those who have been refused admittance are all jet-black idiots; those who are assembled round the anointed altar are pure snow-white men of genius. Look, and judge for yourself. Books, I am told (as every man must know who reads them), are of two kinds, and of two kinds only; those that overflow with wit, imagination, humour, pathos, and constructive ability; those that have neither constructive ability, pathos, humour, imagination, nor wit, and are, moreover, indebted to a printer's reader for what little grammatical correctness they may fortunately possess. The first are the sole, inspired productions of snow-white geniuses; the second, the feeble ravings of mistaken jet-black fools. The moderate, sensible, mediocre, whitey-brown man, if he exists at all in the literary parish, must live in carefully preserved seclusion from the public eye; for he never comes forward either to challenge opinion or to satisfy curiosity.

There is the great and equally well-guarded parish of art, in which the whitey-brown man was never known to penetrate. The parish of art knows of only two productions; the white man's delicious masterpiece, and the black man's unsightly daub. Everything is either priceless or worthless. There is no happy medium. From a Raffaelle we descend to a sign-board; from a sign-board we ascend to a Michael Angelo. The oracles have spoken, and we are bound to believe. There is the pure white-man artist, let him be crowned with diamonds. There is the jet-black-man painter, let him be broken upon the wheel. The whitey-brown man has made no sign.

Architecture has only two kinds of building, to show an eager and expectant public. The scaffolding is removed, and the great work either stands as a noble palace or a mean county jail. The white man has had a limited fund to deal with, but has raised with it a structure which combines the practical solidity of the Grecian with the spiral lightness of the Gothic. The black man has squandered unlimited funds upon a miserable abortion; a patchwork nightmare

with towering steeples suggestive of a Christian temple, and porticoes like a combination of gigantic four-post bedsteads: utterly heathen, from the soles of their plinths to the crowns of their capitals. The whitey-brown man has sent in neither design nor tender.

Sculpture also knows nothing of the existence of the whitey-brown man; for he neither comes forward to adorn the metropolis, nor to disgrace his country; to caricature our greatest heroes in stone, nor to hand them down to admiring posterity in graceful attitudes of marble. The black man and the white man are still the only visible artists; the first to be execrated for his ignorance of the commonest anatomy; the second to be worshipped as a worthy wearer of the mantle of the great Praxiteles.

If I go into the large and important parish of music, I meet with no better success. Black composers are reigning like false usurpers, without the power of putting together two harmonious notes. Discordant productions are being scraped upon discordant instruments by discordant black executants, listened to and applauded by undiscriminating black audiences, while white composers are lying neglected in unmerited obscurity. Suddenly the picture is reversed; the white composer is raised on high; ovations, money, testimonials, decorations, all are too small to reward his merits; all executants are too black to give adequate expression to his immaculate inspirations. But the whitey-brown man, whether singer or composer, has never yet been heard of in this parish.

The great parish of the drama is filled entirely by black and white. There are obscure traditions existing that one or two whitey-brown men have appeared upon the stage in the course of a century; but the evidence is not to be relied upon. Whatever may have been the original colour of the leading artists, they used every means in their power to alter the shade; and, rather than not be considered white, they even consented to be daubed black.

In the more important parishes of politics, war, and diplomacy, I entirely lose even the bare tradition of the whitey-brown man. All politicians, warriors, and diplomatists, I am told, are absolutely black, or absolutely white; benefactors, or curses to their country; patriots in exile, or dangerous despots in power; bloated place-holders, or disinterested guardians of the public weal; warriors who have neither courage, prudence, nor the faculty of combination; warriors who have the faculty of combination in the highest degree, who overflow with courage, and whose prudence is unequalled; diplomatists who are

decorated moths who cut into the national finances, or subtle strategists who preserve the interests of their beloved country from the insidious attacks of rivals and wily monarchs. There is nothing between these two extremes—nothing in the shape of a whitey-brown man.

I go into a law-court, and look upon nothing but black and white: the plaintiff, pure and spotless; the defendant, a villain of the deepest dye. If the jury, in their ignorance, and with their defective vision, fancy they see before them a whitey-brown defendant, and a whitey-brown plaintiff, I hear them reproved at once by the clear-sighted judge, who requests them to declare that they look upon nothing but perfect black and perfect white.

Over the convivial dinner-table I hear that all men are of the purest white, and have been so from their cradles upwards. Here is the furnace which purifies the blackest man amongst us, at least as long as the bottle circulates and the chairman is proposing the regulation health. The whitey-brown man is never seen at these gatherings of the good and pure; the stewards have not invited him; the oldest waiter does not know him. What am I to conclude, but that there is no such a moderate, mediocre, happy medium, rare, priceless creature as the whitey-brown man in *any* parish?

MEN IN MASKS.

I AM not about to observe that all the world is a stage, because that remark has appeared before. I am not about to compare my fellow-creatures to players, because that comparison was common-place in the time of Queen Elizabeth. Masks, as distinguished from faces, is my little grain of common-place, which I am going to beat out in a somewhat spreading and ill-natured manner.

How many houses do I know that are open glass-houses, in which the inhabitants, like monkeys in a cage, are always playing antics for the amusement of their friends and the public? Hundreds; thousands; tens of thousands. How many of these people are not living under a mask which is never thrown off—night or day—as long as any

one is found to gaze upon them? Not one;—I am grieved to say it.

Honesty is not rare; virtue is plentiful; courage can be had for the asking; but people will not be natural; they scorn repose, they are always striking an attitude; they are always 'going in' for something.

There is my fearfully active friend, with his very transparent mask, who is always going in for energy. His presence is like a whirlwind. He cannot sit still. He was in Paris yesterday. He will be on the top of Snowdon to-morrow. He came up from Cambridge this morning to keep an appointment, and he has just ten minutes to spare, which he has considerately devoted to me. And what am I doing? Smoking my pipe in my slippers and dressing-gown, as usual? Ah, well; all men are not made alike. Of course I have heard of his starting two daily newspapers, organizing a new line of American packet-ships, and getting into Parliament for an Irish borough, since the week before last? I was not aware that he was the sole contractor for the Grand Trunk Railroad of California? Oh, yes. Passed five weeks in a railway express carriage, issuing orders to clerks and work-people, who leaped in and out at certain stations. Some people can do these things; others sink under them. Capital story about a 'boots,' at Manchester. Asked to be called, with hot water, at four a.m., but the waiter forgot to put it on the slate. Walked into the coffee-room of the hotel at twelve fifteen, p.m.; and, when the Boots came in with his cap in his hand, apologizing for the waiter's neglect, told him he—No. 14—had been to London and back since then, and had forgotten all about it. Astonishment of Boots quite amazing. Of course I shall go and see him when his new mansion is built. Plans just decided upon; foundation scooped out; all to be finished, under heavy penalties, in twenty-one days. Good-bye. Oh, my poor head!

Not very unlike this violent mummer, is my friend who wears the robust mask—who goes in for rude health and ruddy vigour. He is always draining a pot of porter, with a loud smack of the lips, stamping his feet, striking his chest, and giving imaginary blows from the shoulder. He rises at six every morning (summer or winter); he leaps into a cold-water bath (summer or winter), sometimes half-full of ice; he takes a three-mile spin up hill, and a three-mile trot down; he scorns tea, coffee, eggs, and toast, and breakfasts on half-raw beefsteaks, stale bread, and porter. He plays a good deal at cricket, and

he almost lives in the open air; he has never had a day's illness in his life, and he does not know what a doctor's bill means; he weighs fourteen stone, but every ounce of flesh upon him is as firm as India-rubber (feel and try), and he only wonders any sensible person can hesitate for a moment to follow his example. Nothing disagrees with him. He can stop up all night; he can drink bad wine; he can digest pork-pies, welsh-rarebit, and lobster-salad, washed down with punch that is made to suit a salamander. Wonderful! Though his mask is as broad and palpable as a giant's in a pantomime, he never loses an opportunity of thrusting it under my nose.

Another wearer of a broad, coarse mask, is my ready-money friend, who goes in for universal power, based upon cash capital. His funds may not be extensive—I know he is not very rich—but he makes the most of the goods with which the gods have provided him. He likes large, heavy coins, that make a substantial show; and crowns, half-crowns, and thick copper pennies must have been created for his special gratification.

His purse is like a huge sand-bag, not easily forgotten, and it is no wonder he was never known to leave it behind him. He considers no man wealthy, no matter what his landed or other property may be, unless he can command a stout bagful of the circulating medium. He does not like bank-notes, he despises bank-cheques, and he takes his stand firmly as an individual on a pure metallic currency.

It is his boast that he never yet owed a penny for a single hour; and it is also his further boast that he never will. He smiles at debtors' prisons, insolvent courts, and lawyers' offices; as, he says; that such places were never meant for him. He throws his heavy purse on the counter when he is driving a hard bargain, and he trusts to its silent power to bring him off in triumph. He knows, or affects to know, of nothing that cannot be settled with ready money; and he considers the legal system of fines a convincing proof of the correctness of his opinions. If he ran over a child in the street or shot a peasant-boy instead of a partridge, he would pull out his sand-bag purse before the magistrate, and ask, 'How much?' with the most provoking confidence. His wealth is of the electro-plated kind, and it sparkles in proportion to its shallowness.

Another wearer of a mask, who contrasts forcibly with the last, is my extremely delicate friend, who goes in for refinement and an elegant state of repose. His nerves are very fine; his taste is exquisite; he cannot bear popular pictures, popular music, or popular

literature; he hears the bellowings of stage-tragedians, and the trumpet-song in the opera of Puritani, without moving from his comfortable chamber-couch; he once ate a pea; he once saw a masterpiece of Turner's painting, and he had a brain-fever which lasted several days; he never had a coat that fitted him properly, or a well-made pair of boots; he would not be a Member of Parliament for twenty thousand a-year; he thinks the ballet is not what it used to be; he says that people do not dress now-a-days, but jump about in sacks; he has been to Brighton, but never to Ramsgate—thank Heaven, he has not yet fallen so low as that. He would not be introduced to my energetic or my robust masker for all the wealth of Australia.

He can see nothing to amuse him in town, and he abhors the rude, half-savage sports of the field. He calls his valet, and finding that no turbot is to be had in the market, he requests to be left undisturbed in bed, until the same hour on the following day.

This wearer of a thin, transparent mask may be called a rather prejudiced man, if anything so vigorous as prejudice can exist in so affectedly feeble a body. He has a contrast in the person of another masker, whose pride it is to go in for universal liberty of opinion.

My friend who wears the unprejudiced mask, is never tired of calling himself a citizen of the world. He belongs to no country; he has no national feeling. He would sleep in a double-bedded room with a Negro, a red Indian, or a Malay pirate. He knows no distinction of caste, colour, or position; and he cannot understand why the eternal principles of right and freedom should be thought good in one latitude and longitude, and bad in another. So far I could agree with him, if he was not so dreadfully conscious of his attitude. George the Fourth may have been no better than the late King of Oude, but it is rather antithetical (if not treasonable) to say so. My friend in the unprejudiced mask is as lenient to individuals as he is to nationalities. His opinion upon the alleged tyranny of Richard the Third is suspended while he waits for further evidence.

He considers the case not proved against many notorious criminals of history, and he is compelled in every company to check all abuse of their memories. He married a lineal descendant of the late Mrs Brownrigg, to show his superiority to names and connections; for the same reason he chooses his servants from the jails and the street, and passes by the possessors of long character pedigrees.

He carries into private life the calmness of the judicial bench, and he is excessively annoyed at any public comments upon a case that is

under judgment. Here, also, I could agree with him, if his mask was not quite so transparent. He will salute a cats'-meat man in the middle of Regent Street, if the cats'-meat man had the advantage of knowing him in his youth. He believes in no monstrosities of foreign dress or cookery, until he has patiently tried the garments, and tasted all the dishes. He has appeared in the Chinese slipper, to the manifest torture of his feet; and he has tasted of birds'-nests and stewed kittens to the evident torture of his stomach.

To such a pitch does he carry his masquerade, full in the public gaze, that he affects to feel more pride in being seen talking to the common hangman, than receiving a mark of familiar recognition from the greatest hero of the day.

These are only some few representative men in masks—picked at random from the social masquerade—who have the talent to be artificial, but not the courage to be natural. As I look upon them I become, however unwillingly, one of the posturing crowd myself; and though shrouded in that small cynical mask (which is so easy to put on), I am willing to throw off my disguise if they will abandon theirs, and to welcome them gladly as men and as brothers.

CARRIAGES.

THOUGH I have not mixed very much with the world, I flatter myself I know a good deal about it. I have got eyes; I have got ears; and I have had the advantage of living half my life in a moderate-sized, second-rate square, near the exact centre of the metropolis. My neighbours are professional people of all classes, who use their neighbourhood until they gather strength for a leap into one more fashionable, and who sometimes miss their footing, and sink back into suburban obscurity. I am a maiden lady, living on my property—a Government annuity—and I stand like a monument, or something of that kind, unmoved by the changes around me. I could write a very instructive essay upon the philosophy of squares, but that is not my present object. My mind

is full of the subject of carriages—broughams, chariots, and such things—and I have been advised to put my thoughts upon paper. Miss Biggleswade, a particular friend of mine, and a very sensible person, who takes tea with me twice a-week—Wednesday and Saturday—has often urged me to record the results of my observation.

'Miss Camomile,' she has said, 'I am sure you are neglecting to use the talent with which it has pleased Providence to provide you. I have read all the books that now come out, which are never tired of abusing the hollow mockeries of the universe, and I assure you that I have met with nothing in their pages so edifying as your conversation over your own tea-table.'

These are Miss Biggleswade's exact words, and they have determined me to write a few lines on the philosophy of carriages.

I will not involve myself in any quarrels by mentioning names; I will not commit myself by making any direct assertions; but it has always seemed to me a very extraordinary and inexplicable thing that Dr A.'s professional skill should have increased so wonderfully from the moment that he started a carriage. Before that event took place, his reputation was not worth a jar of tamarinds, and no one in their senses would have called him in to doctor a kitten or a sick lapdog. His diploma was obtained from a place they call Idlebeggar, or some such name, in Germany, where degrees, I am told, are sold in the open streets, at a price varying from five shillings to fifteen-and-sixpence. He cut off the right leg of poor Mrs B.'s baby, when there was no more the matter with it than with the lamp-post round the corner. The unfortunate child has been a cripple ever since, with a wooden stump, which is always making holes in the flower-beds of the enclosure. He knew no more of the commonest drugs than my milkman—perhaps not half so much, in these days of general adulteration—and if it had not been for his assistant, a young man whom he kept in a back-kitchen upon forty pounds a-year and his victuals, I am convinced the whole neighbourhood would have been decimated by poison. People talk of the prudence and economy of putting down a carriage because they are totally ignorant of the subject upon which they are discoursing. If Dr A. had not procured the green brougham with the two gray horses—upon credit, I believe—at the exact moment that he did, he might have found himself, in another twelvemonth, behind an apothecary's counter. He had enough sense and knowledge of the world to save himself from that; and poor Mrs B.'s crippled baby, with all his many other failures, were at once forgotten by his

patients. People of that very large class who have more money than wisdom immediately discovered him to be a highly meritorious practitioner. People who did not keep carriages themselves were particular in engaging him, because they liked to see his handsome vehicle parading before their houses. He attended consultations he was never invited to before, and secured many acquaintances as patients by taking them home from evening-parties in his carriage. Though his brougham was not decorated with placards announcing his trade and his residence, it was quite as much an advertising medium as any van from a furnishing ironmonger's.

There is Mr C., the great portrait-painter, who got me to give him six sittings, and then could make nothing of me; it is quite marvellous what a command of form and colour he has acquired since he has had the command of a carriage. Though I cannot see any connection between the two things myself, there are plenty of people who can, and I suppose I must therefore consider myself a remarkably stupid person. I have heard his pictures called caricatures, tea-boards, sign-boards, Babylonian frescoes, and many other contemptuous names; but that was some little time before he had improved himself with a carriage. Now his critics are content to hang up in their halls and dining-rooms the vilest daub he thinks proper to produce, for his terms have advanced with his fashionable style of living, and there is no vulgar suspicion so strong and lasting as a belief in a high-priced article, especially in pictures. His barmaids have become blooming matrons; his old hags are turned into aristocratic dowagers; his angular imps of children are changed to Sir Joshua's cherubs; and his butchers' boys are the flower of English chivalry. This comes of stopping the way with a carriage.

There is Mr D., the celebrated musician; he could neither sing, compose, nor play until he indulged in the luxury of a carriage. From that moment, his voice became a tenor of remarkable purity and range; his touch upon the piano was considered equal to the best masters; and the music-publishers suddenly found out they had long neglected a man of decided genius. He composed an opera which a theatrical manager was found to produce solely because it had got the carriage-stamp of excellence. Of course, the public were not to be deceived, for Mr D., although he made the most of waving a white stick in the orchestra—conducting, I believe, they call it—could not bring his chariot into the theatre, and the piece was strongly condemned on the first night of representation. The audience, who had loudly expressed

their contempt of the production, were astonished to read the next morning in their papers, that the work was the most brilliant success of the most brilliant composer of his time. The carriage had been driving about pretty briskly during the night.

Miss E., who has suddenly obtained a reputation as one of the most rising young authoresses of the day, has ridden gently into notoriety on the borrowed cushions of Lady F.'s brougham. If you cannot purchase or hire a carriage, the next best thing is to borrow one. Miss E. had more wit and judgment than I gave her credit for, when she fastened herself so securely to the skirts of her ladyship. The basketful of well-thumbed manuscripts—fashionable novels made up of paste, scissors, and the experience of a back drawing-room—were at once taken out and dusted, and put with the writer in a corner of my lady's carriage. Fashionable publishers who, before this, were always choked up with matter, were now delighted to be favoured with the offer of so highly meritorious a work, especially as it was to be dedicated, by permission, to her ladyship. Miss E. must be a clever person, after all, to manage so well as she does with such very slender advantages. We must not be too hard upon the errors in her works, for people cannot be expected to scratch out and alter with a pair of scissors.

There is Mr G., who now calls himself an architect, because he could never succeed as a builder; he knows as well as any man the advantages of owning a handsome chariot. The only local building he ever had a contract for was our parochial school-house; and one day, just as the boys had providentially gone to dinner, this precious structure fell down, and buried an usher and a man who was repairing the flooring. There was an inquest, of course, a very formal affair, and Mr G. prepared for it by engaging an eminent counsel, and starting a distinguished carriage. The counsel did his work well, and so did the vehicle. Mr G. got off without so much as a censure, for his equipage was always driving up and down before the court; and it was clearly shown that the carpenter who had perished in the ruins had brought it entirely on himself by using spikes instead of nails, and driving them down with a clumsy sledge-hammer. Mr G. had the decency, however, to retire from the building business after this, and to turn himself into an architect. He now draws very pretty pictures upon paper, which other people alter, and build from or not, as they think proper; while he secures a very high payment for his designs, because he rides in his carriage.

I am not surprised at the gregarious habits of carriage-made people. I am not surprised that Mr H., the well-known solicitor, whose reputation is based upon his brougham, should give his briefs to Mr K., the popular barrister, whose reputation is also based upon his brougham. I am not surprised that both these gentlemen should be standing counsel and attorney to Mr L., the banker, whose wealth, or reputed wealth, has to a great extent, no better foundation than his carriage. Nor am I surprised that the two legal gentlemen should bank at the establishment of Mr L. There is a principle of mutual advantage at work in these cases, which explains the interchange of patronage; but I am astonished that the general public, who have no interest to consult, except to get the very best article, advice, or assistance for their money, should bow down before an empty go-cart, that costs, perhaps, a hundred and fifty pounds a year; while they talk very loudly of the car of Juggernauth, and pity the wretched superstition of the Hindoos.

MY NAME.

IT may be of very little consequence where a man is born; it may be of very little consequence what his parents have been before him; it may be of very little consequence whether he is physically weak, or physically strong; but it is certainly of vital interest to him what name has fallen on his shoulders. I am not now considering Christian appellations, though they are not to be despised. I can imagine a very matter-of-fact individual pining gradually away with secret grief because his godfathers have called him Udolpho. I can imagine a gentleman of strong conservative principles living a life of torture because his first name is Cromwell; and I can imagine another gentleman of an opposite way of thinking being equally tormented with the Christian title of Stuart. I can imagine a poetic being writhing under the name of Herring; a feeble mannikin smiling sadly as he reflects upon his name of Hercules. I can suppose many cases of life-long torment even more painful and self-evident than these; but my present object is to direct attention

to the influence exercised by surnames. I will give a few imaginary examples.

My name is Shakespeare: there is no getting out of that. I might call myself Warwick Avon, Esquire, and succeed in deceiving the general public; but my family, my friends, and my acquaintances would know the painful truth. Every man feels within him an inspiration to do something; and I am sure I could write a round of plays. I might not attain the rude vigour of the Elizabethan dramatists; I might not perhaps equal the brilliancy of dialogue which distinguishes the writers of a later period; I might not be able to reach that ingenuity of construction, and that high morality, which make the modern French drama what it is; but I am sure that my natural genius lies in the direction of the literature of the stage. What prevents my making an effort? My name. I cannot get over that mountain, which has accumulated some centuries before my time. I dread the jokes that would be inevitably made upon my first, my sixth, or my tenth attempt. I know what all the small critical wits would say; I could not exist to be slapped upon the back in public places, and be asked 'How goes it, my young Swan, in the realms of Thespis?' Some men might be equal to the endurance of this, but I am not one of them. I could not enjoy a life that was one competitive examination,—especially where the odds were fifty thousand to one against me. I am mute; I am inglorious; I am dumb and inarticulate; I am conscious of my latent talent, but I stop its natural development; I decline the struggle; I do not start in the race. And why? Because my name is Shakespeare.

My name is Wren. I feel a call to do something in the shape of public buildings, but when I take the designing pencil in my hand, the great black mass of our national cathedral overshadows my genius. I have no feeling for poetry; I could not carve a statue, I have no mechanical aptitude, I could not paint a picture, and I have no desire to write books. My intellectual impulses all point in an architectural direction, and yet I dare not give my inclination play. I have not the courage to brave the world's ill-natured comparisons; I shun a perpetual competitive examination with one whose fame and importance were settled before I was born. I am nothing but a discontented bricklayer. And why? Because my name is Wren.

My name is Cook. If any one ever made me a captain, I think I should go mad. Travelling is with me a passion—almost a disease; but I have a particular aversion to going round the world. I need

not enter into my reasons for this, as they must be sufficiently obvious. I have seen a good many countries; I have lived with a good many people; I have spoken strange languages, and I have eaten of strange dishes. I am not deaf, I am not blind, and my experiences would not be altogether unacceptable to my fellow-creatures; but I decline to record them. They will die with me. And why? Because my name is Cook.

My name is Hogarth. If there is one thing that I have a special talent for, it is painting. It hardly becomes me to expatiate upon my own merits; but, as I am the sole depository of the secret, I must necessarily speak, or the world will never be informed. I have not the colour of Rubens; I have not the drawing of Michael Angelo; I have not the grace of Raffaelle, nor the religious sentiment of Correggio; my force all lies in pictorial narrative, and my powers of caricature. Why have I never painted anything, but what I have immediately destroyed; and why, at the present moment, am I in business as a soap-boiler? Because my name is Hogarth.

My name is Gibbon. People are always asking me (of course, sarcastically), why I do not make an effort to keep up the literary celebrity of the family. The idea has certainly presented itself, even before it was suggested; but what can I do? By a singular fatality, or coincidence, I have devoted all my studies to the subject of ancient Rome. I believe I could write some very instructive commentaries upon the works of Niebuhr, and other recent historians; and I once went so far as to prepare a few sheets of the manuscript, which, of course, were never published. After much deliberation I put them in the fire. And why? Because my name is Gibbon.

My name is Watt. I am a working-man, and I have lived much in smoky, manufacturing towns. I have seen a thousand locomotive engines collected under a shed; I have walked through miles of revolving-wheels, rising and falling cranks, whirling straps, and hissing valves; and I think there are many things that yet require to be improved. I have made drawings; I have ventured upon suggestions; and, once or twice, I have constructed a model. These things never came to anything, for I had no heart to proceed. There is small wonder in this. My name is Watt.

My name is Blackstone. I have been five-and-thirty years in a lawyer's office; and I ought to know something about law. I do know something about law. I think the statutes at large the finest comic work in the English language. Whenever I feel dull myself,

or think my family want rousing, I take home a volume of this curious work to read, and it always puts every one into a good humour. I am a practical man, and know the working of the law. I could write some valuable legal essays upon law and practice, but there is one thing that will always deter me. My name is Blackstone.

My name is Milton. I could produce an epic poem—or half a dozen—if I set my mind upon it. They are not the most difficult things in English composition (we used to do fragments of them at school), though they are extremely difficult to dispose of when finished. Publishers avoid them with an instinctive dread, unless they are at least a hundred years old. They find no sale on the railway bookstalls; and the men who compose them generally live on the kindness of their friends. If I were to write upon lofty subjects, until the hairs of my few readers stood on end, the old boys (I allude to the classical epic writers) would still gain the day. I cannot afford to live upon prospective fame, while coke, coals, wood, and potatoes, remain at their present prices. I am now a newspaper reporter. I might have tried my epic hand, during my leisure hours; but one obstacle has always stood in my way. My name is Milton.

My name is Purcell. I have composed one or two popular songs under a carefully maintained incognito, but I never had the courage to venture further. The risk is greater than the pleasure; and I live in daily fear of even these slight compositions being hurled at my head with yells of disapprobation. Happy Smith; fortunate Jones! You can indulge your taste for inventive harmony without any chance of being tormented with ungenerous comparisons; while I shall go down to my grave with many silent symphonies and oratorios —because my name is Purcell.

My name is Garrick. I have elocutionary skill, an agreeable presence, a knowledge of stage-craft, a strong conception of character, and a sympathy with every form of the drama; but I have never got further than the prompter's box. My illustrious namesake is famous for hanging between tragedy and comedy; and this has proved a fatal obstacle to me. My first appearance would have been too good an opportunity for the critics to let slip; a feigned name in the bills would not have saved me long. 'Like his ancestor,' they would have said, 'he hangs between the two great divisions of the drama; but, unlike his ancestor, he is incapable of reaching either.' The fear of this antithesis has kept me in a private sphere. A prompter I have

been, and a prompter I shall die; for my name, unfortunately, is Garrick.

Better to be born with one leg, one arm, one eye—better to be a foundling castaway, without a home or a title, than to bear the name of one of those great human monuments, the standard celebrities of the past.

TOO LATE.

I AM a punctual man; nervously, fretfully, painfully punctual. If I have an engagement on business or pleasure, I prepare to keep it some hours before the time appointed, and am totally unable to think of anything, or do anything until it is over. I have a marvellous faculty for believing that my watch must have stopped, or that the clocks in the house are not strictly regulated by the most approved standard of time. I arrive at theatres and places of public entertainment about half a day before the doors are ever opened. I am always the first stranger at a ball or a dinner-party, although I know in the one case I shall have to dance in the first quadrille, and in the other, I shall have to bear the awful weight of the early attempts at conversation. If, in the performance of my social duties, I go to a funeral, my painfully punctual habit carries me there long before the necessary gloomy officials have taken possession of the house, and sometimes before the chief performers in the melancholy play have made up their faces, and put on the regulation garb of woe. If I am staying at a country inn, and have given orders to the 'boots' to be called at an early hour to meet a coach, or a railway train, I get feverish snatches of sleep during the short, restless night, and am up and dressed long before the required knocking takes place at my chamber door. If I am waiting in the coffee-room for the one omnibus in the town, appointed to convey passengers to and from the railway, I have paid my bill hours before it was necessary, and am standing nervously at the window with my watch in one hand, and my Bradshaw in the other, wondering at the reckless stupidity of the men in charge of the vehicle, who allow, as it seems

to me, about two minutes to run a distance of nearly two miles from the hotel to the station.

My morbid punctual temperament leads me to seek my principal mental amusement in feeding in imagination upon pictures of being too late under the most trying circumstances. I love to suppose myself in all possible painful positions arising from delay, carelessness, and procrastination. I fancy myself in a cab, miserably jammed up in a long line of carts and waggons in the midst of the great struggling city. Ages seem to pass away, and yet the wedged vehicles and howling drivers move not an inch; and I hear an hour tolling from the tower of a neighbouring church, every stroke of which goes like a nail into my brain. At that instant I see an anxious, weeping face whirled away from a distant railway, over the sea, to a remote land; never, perhaps, to greet me again in this world. On I go when it is too late, to find a dreadful stillness, where all was noise and excitement a short half-hour before; to find a clear platform, closed gates, careless porters, and no one to whom to unburden a heavy, self-reproaching heart.

Sometimes I fancy myself arriving at a picturesque spot in a country celebrated for its beauty all over the world. I am not seeking for mountains, cascades, rocks, forests, nor ruined castles; but for one whom I have been struggling to reach for many weary days. How harsh and cold sounds the precise voice of the hotel book-keeper, when he tells me that the one I am in search of started that morning for England, and left no word or sign? I wander about the town from that moment, like a drunken man, listless, aimless, and with eyes closed to all the natural attractions of the place. The consciousness of a few ill-spent hours in another spot, blackens the blue sky, and makes discordant the music of the waterfalls.

I imagine myself far from the busy clatter of railways in some small country town in the very heart of England, the requirements of whose humble traffic are fully satisfied by a coach running twice a week to the borders of civilization. I retire to rest early in order that I may rise in time to catch this bi-weekly vehicle that passes through the town or village at the eccentric hour of four in the morning. I have taken the precaution to lay a whole train of instructions at the feet of the boots, chambermaid, and waiter, about calling me at three o'clock precisely. The waiter is considered to be very safe, and the chambermaid is looked upon as a person in whom dependence may be placed, and it is arranged that each of these

persons, or both, as the case may be, shall, immediately upon waking at any hour, arouse the boots from his lair, over the stables, that he may in his turn awaken me, and bring me the necessary hot water, etc. So far the machinery seems perfect, and I sink to sleep. When I awake, the sun is shining full into my room, and there is, for the village, a strange bustle in the principal street. I endeavour, for a moment, to collect my faculties, and my first impulse is to rush for my watch. That faithful companion tells me that it is twenty minutes to twelve in broad day, and the whole truth dawns upon my mind, that I have overslept myself and missed the coach. Six frantic pulls at the bell-rope, and the 'boots' appears to defend himself by stating that he called me at the hour appointed, and that I answered, and he substantiates his statement by pointing to a mug of cold water that was once warm, outside my bed-room door. Complaint is useless, and I have no alternative left but to spend the half-week in and about the village. Posting is out of the question, as the village does not boast a single chaise, and there is no chance of a mail-cart, or any other conveyance of an irregular kind passing through the place. There is nothing left but to settle down for three days and three nights, and endeavour to take an interest in things that are now hateful in my eyes, because forced upon me against my will. The trout-stream that pleased me so much four-and-twenty hours before, is now, in imagination, as black as a Manchester canal; and the trout that I caught with such industry, and devoured with such avidity, then, are now more repulsive than the oily fried fish of Whitechapel. The ancient market-place (time of the Saxons), that I made such minute inquiries about the day before yesterday, is now a greater bore than Hicks's Hall, or the origin of the three balls of the Lombards. There is the old church with the Pharos tower, most venerable of all those venerable structures that are wonderfully picturesque and totally uninhabitable—crumbling old temple, mixture of the cow-shed and the early Norman styles of architecture, whose snuffy brickwork is only kept together by the ivy, and a high hill, which shelters it from the sharp winds; I was mad the other day to take photographs of it from every conceivable point of view, but now I feel disposed to tilt against it on horseback in the night, and knock it down, for the purpose of creating a sensation. The stable-boys, who idle about sucking straws the whole day through, know that I have missed the coach, and they impart their knowledge to any one willing to receive

it, until I become a by-word and a joke in the village. After the second day, I get weak and imbecile; excited even by such an event as the changing of horses for the coach that passes through once a week in the opposite direction to that in which I wish to go. At last my deliverance comes, and I stay up all night this time to receive it. I think, if all the places are taken, I shall become a fit inmate for an asylum of idiots.

Too late for a coach under such circumstances is bad enough, but I can imagine a position infinitely worse.

I am a favourite comedian, the pride, the glory, the support, of a leading London theatre. In an unguarded moment I take a sudden fancy for a country trip, and run down by rail about twenty miles, and turn off for a good day's walk over the fields, the lanes, and commons. In the afternoon I return to the station calmly and leisurely to catch a train that shall deposit me in town about six in the evening. I enter the little frail hut that serves for the station where I have to embark, and my eye rests upon a broad-faced clock, the hands of which are at a quarter to seven. I look again, and find that my eyes have not deceived me; and the boy in charge of the place, in answer to my hasty questions, coolly informs me that the clock keeps London railway time, and that there is no train for two hours. I sink in horror upon the one thin, hard, narrow, wooden seat in the place, and a thousand wild schemes chase each other with fearful rapidity through my troubled brain. Solitary is the station as a witch's hut upon a heath, and nothing like a conveyance is visible on the line, except a navigator's wheelbarrow turned upside down upon a heap of gravel. My eye follows the long, thin, tapering lines of rails in the direction of London, until they pierce a clump of trees, and vanish at that distant point from my sight. Can I run along the line, and by that means reach my appointment, even an hour later than the proper time? How repulsive everything about the country appears now, the trees, the fields, and the golden sunset; and how I hate the stillness broken only by the cawing of those dreadful rooks in the adjoining park, whose song I would give worlds to exchange for the smoke and rattle of Fleet Street. Why did I ever venture into the treacherous precincts of the picturesque, when I should have been sipping my coffee and reading my paper in my dingy tavern? A roar and a puff of smoke, and the express train whirls by, that might have carried me to my destination in half an hour, if I could

have summoned courage and physical agility to have jumped upon the roofs of the carriages as they passed under the bridge, timing my leap like an acrobat in the circus.

But I miss the golden opportunity, and am again a hopeless inmate of the solitary station, looking vacantly at the clock which has now reached the stroke of seven.

There I sit for the next two hours, while a panorama of events at the theatre passes before my mental vision. I hear the sharp click of the prompter's bell, and the voice of the call-boy, shouting 'overture, gentlemen,' up the staircase. I see my aged dresser, who has been used to punctual men, old actors, and slow makers-up, walking frantically about the room, wondering where I can be, when I have to go on in an elaborate costume, in the middle of the first act. He taxes his memory to ascertain whether I was ever so late before, when the same piece was being performed, and he determines that I never was.

Unable to bear his mental torture any longer, he hobbles down to the hall-keeper, and finds that I have not yet passed into the theatre. Then commences a consultation, and the information is spread behind the curtain that Mr Sockskin has not arrived, although he has to go on in the next scene. Prompter, actors, call-boys, and manager, take the alarm, and the latter dives to his room to prepare a few hasty words of apology. The moment arrives that can be no longer delayed, and the pale, nervous manager goes on in a comic dress, and, with the most heart-broken voice, and the most piteous face, that contrast ludicrously with his gay and facetious attire, tells the disappointed and indignant audience all he knows himself, namely: that Mr Sockskin is not in the theatre. The curtain rings down amidst a torrent of yells, while another piece is being hastily put upon the stage, and I am gnawing my finger-nails in the enforced and unwelcome solitude of the railway station.

These are some of the phantasms of procrastination and delay that a morbidly regular man like myself will occasionally call up before him in his hours of idleness. As there are many men in the world who cannot be kept in the path of temperance, unless awful examples of the effects of intoxication are continually paraded before their eyes, it may be that I unconsciously drill myself in the virtue of punctuality, by indulging my imagination in the opposite vice.

THE ART OF SUCKING CERTAIN EGGS.

THERE are many admirable essays upon deportment, upon the art of standing upon one leg, upon the art of making a little knowledge go a long way, and upon most of the 'habits of good society.' There are profound treatises upon the tying of cravats, upon the fluke considered as an element of social progress, and the true principles of currency. There are 'handbooks' upon dining, and treatises showing us how to live without dinners; with 'ten minutes' advice about keeping a banker,' or about making a banker keep us. All these guides to the art of living, with thousands more of a similar character, are very excellent things in their way, and they show us how well supplied we are with teachers. Almost every man we pass in the street is prepared to direct us in the matter of food, of habits, of morals, or religion; to tell us what *he* considers to be best; to lay bare his little experience before us; and, if need be, to convert us to his peculiar mode of living. I am not free myself from this weakness of human nature, and I therefore speak with little hesitation as a guide upon travelling. I have ridden in many omnibuses, many cabs, and many railway carriages (not to mention many other more eccentric conveyances), and am consequently fully qualified to teach my grandmothers and grandfathers how to suck these particular social eggs.

The first qualification necessary to form a perfect railway traveller is some little knowledge of his subject. He must be familiar with the leading characteristics of the different main lines; the plans of their termini; the number and position of their different junctions; the peculiar local pronunciation of their porters; the chief towns or ports they run down to; and the character of their ordinary passenger traffic. No man, for instance, who travels second-class in a night-train between London and Portsmouth, or between Bristol and Plymouth, or between Birmingham and Liverpool, must complain if he finds his carriage turned into the hold of a ship, and himself sur-

rounded by noisy, mutinous mariners. He must not complain if he is choked with the fumes of strong cavendish ; if he is jammed up with tar-smelling bundles of naval bedding ; if he is asked to sing a song about poor Tom Bowling ; to join a score of excited, brown-faced, blue-shirted pirates in a lusty chorus ; or forced to drink raw brandy out of enormous stone bottles. A railroad is little more than a common highway ; and those who *will* go to Portsmouth, Plymouth, or Liverpool in second-class carriages, must do as Portsmouth, Plymouth, or Liverpool does. On the other hand, a traveller who rises early, and takes a 'market-train' from Peterborough to Northampton, must not complain if he finds himself amongst agriculturalists and cattle-dealers, who breathe an atmosphere of ale, and cheese, and onions. As he has selected his travelling-bed, so he must lie upon it ; and the best thing he can do is to imitate Locke, the philosopher, and cross-examine his neighbours with a view of extracting valuable information.

A knowledge of stations, routes, and junctions is most essential to the perfect railway traveller, because without it there can be none of that well-grounded self-reliance which is one of the few luxuries of travelling. There is hardly a more pitiable object to be met with in a railway carriage of any class, than a man who scarcely knows where he has come from, where he is going to, what line he is on, whether Manchester is in Lancashire, Kent, or the Eastern Counties, and who cannot find his way through the mazes of 'Bradshaw.' Such a man is not a living, thinking, independent human being ; he is a band-box, a portmanteau, a carpet-bag. He lies at the mercy of every fellow-passenger, every ticket-collector, every guard or porter. He wears out the patience of those who have the misfortune to sit in the same carriage ; he thrusts his head out of the window at every station, under the notion that he is being whirled away from his destination, or has already arrived at it ; he loses his ticket on the platform, or puts it in some part of his clothes where he cannot find it ; and generally leaves a comforter, an umbrella, or a hat-box under the seat behind him. There are thousands of such helpless wanderers always roaming about the country for some mysterious purpose, who either cannot learn the art of travelling, or will not submit to be taught. They belong to the class who are always too late for trains, and who spend half a day at some lonely hermitage of a station. They get out at great junctions, where ten minutes are allowed for refreshment, pay for soups and sandwiches which they never find time to eat, forget the position of their carriage (its number they never think of noting), are

pushed hurriedly from door to door by unceremonious officials, and are haunted for hours with a dreadful suspicion that they have given a sovereign at the refreshment-counter in mistake for a shilling.

For far more intelligent and observant travellers than these there are also many traps and pitfalls. Swindon, on the Great Western Line, is a refreshment-station so constructed, that, unless you are careful, you may go out at a door exactly like the one you came in at, get into a train that is waiting for you exactly like the one you have just left, lean back on your comfortable seat for about an hour, and find yourself at Gloucester instead of Bristol. Leeds, Manchester, or any other towns or junctions which form a meeting-point for many converging lines, are even more bewildering to those who have not cool heads, inquiring tongues, and some little experience. Roadside stations, again, as announced by the ordinary run of porters, are dialect puzzles, only to be unravelled by such curious inquirers into the Lancashire, Yorkshire, Dorset, and West Country languages as Prince Lucien Bonaparte and kindred linguists. Apart from local or imported peculiarities of pronunciation, there is a general drawling, sing-song, professional twang, which must be specially contrived to hide the names of such stations from railway passengers. This may, perhaps, be defended on the same ground as the Jew clothesman defended his 'O' clo'' abbreviation when attacked by Samuel Taylor Coleridge,—viz. that any one who had to pronounce a particular word an infinite number of times would soon fall into a like habit of adulterating language. This may be a good answer from a street-hawker, who must starve if he cannot make himself understood; but is hardly so good when coming from men whose faults are paid for by others.

A railway porter whose mind is not given to his work, whose thoughts are above and beyond the dull level of his surroundings, or who has fallen into a certain habit from long familiarity with a certain place—may be a very troublesome guide on a busy platform. I have accosted such public servants gently and civilly, and have once or twice observed them gazing over me or through me into the dim future,—thinking, it may be, of fate, free-will, and foreknowledge absolute; drunk, it may be, with reading intoxicating accounts of 'self-made men' (price one shilling, at the railway book-stall), and feeling themselves already budding into chairmen and directors. I have observed that nothing but the glitter of a sixpence will ever break this reverie of ambition; and without blaming those who first introduced the old coaching system of bribing upon railroads, I am

content to accept it as an established fact, and not only to bribe porters myself, but to recommend every traveller to do so. The loss of time in standing out against this 'imposition,' as it is called, upon purity principles is greater than the gain, and these sixpences are now a part of the recognized cost of a journey.

An eccentric, weak, or really absent-minded porter or official, who has been suddenly transplanted from a large to a small station, or a small to a large station, is much more difficult to deal with. A station-master who is not strong enough for his place, who is easily flurried by an extra excursion-train, or an unexpected cargo of luggage, hunting-dogs, or horses, is apt to forget that attention to 'points' and signals which is necessary to prevent accidents. Carefully as our wonderful network of railways is managed, a few officers of this kind will always creep in, from some error of judgment on the part of superintendents. Luckily their shortcomings are not observed by the general public; and until a collision does occur, the travellers repose in the bliss of ignorance. There are a few railway officers, however, who have no skill in concealing their defects, and the public either laugh at or censure them, according to the humour of the moment. A porter who has not been long promoted from following the plough, and who may have been an excellent servant at one of those little washhouse-looking stations near a bridge, which is happy in attending to its four or five trains a-day, may be almost driven mad by the bustle of a great inland terminus like Birmingham, with its scores of trains always rattling in from the east, west, north, and south. He may miss that little plot of sloping earth at the side of the station where he trained his scarlet-runners, grew his enormous potatoes and gooseberries, and raised the name of his beloved dwelling-place in oyster-shell-relievo. He may pine to return to that rural quiet, which was never broken by more than a dozen daily passengers, with familiar faces, whose Christmas-boxes were a certain annuity to him, and who never bullied him like hasty commercial travellers overburdened with luggage.

On the other hand, a porter removed from the noise and excitement of Birmingham to one of these rail-side hermitages, would hardly do his work in a cheerful spirit, and might probably take to drinking in the intervals of business. There are porters of both these kinds to be met with,—humble, would-be useful, but misplaced and discontented men, and happy is the traveller who is not dependent on them for assistance or information. I have heard of one who had

somehow drifted from the north into the south-west, and who daily drove weak-minded, ignorant passengers frantic by shouting out 'Birmingham' instead of Balham. Upon being remonstrated with, he excused himself by saying he had been calling out the name of the first town for fifteen years; and he put it to any man whether it was easy to throw off, in a few days, or even weeks, such a long-settled habit.

The morals of railway travelling—the higher etiquette proper to be observed in railway carriages—form a most important part of this subject. It is not alone sufficient to avoid treading on a fellow-passenger's toes, or sitting on his hat, or incommoding him with gusts of wind from the open window. The social amenities of railway intercourse should embrace many acts far more thoughtful and unselfish than these, and opposed to the first-come-first-served principle which governs so many travellers. It is very delightful for two or more intimate friends to be able to retain a whole compartment to themselves during a long journey, without paying the company for such a luxury; but they should not grasp at this unfair privilege by filling each seat in their carriage with portmanteaus and rugs, or by acting the old rather exploded game of the lunatic and his keepers. They should not attempt to block up the carriage-windows at the side of the platform; nor should they commit themselves so far as to say that several seats are engaged by passengers who have just gone to purchase a newspaper. Such tricks and misrepresentations are sure to be exposed by some determined station-superintendent before the starting of the train, and they often lead to constraint and unpleasantness. The travellers who are forced into such carriages by the arm of authority are not likely to prove very agreeable companions on the journey, while the greedy first-comers can never remove the impression caused by their deliberate lies. The softest seat, in such cases, becomes hard and unbearable, and the carriage is turned into a cage, a round-house, or a dungeon.

The nature and amount of conversation fit for travelling companions must be left, in a great measure, to the taste and discretion of travellers. It is not well, perhaps, to turn a carriage into a 'discussion forum,' nor is it well to venture upon no remarks to your neighbour beyond the level of commonplace. The description of personal diseases and their symptoms, of family and professional matters, may at once be struck out of the list of allowable topics; and it is a little out of date to make any remarks about the wonders of steam, or the

once miraculous fact—now no longer miraculous—that a man may breakfast in London, dine at Manchester, and sup in Edinburgh. It is not well to persist in addressing observations, either profound or simple, to a fellow-passenger who is evidently averse to conversation, because many men are often travelling on anxious and important business that requires sustained thought and reflection. Some economists of time are fond of studying or arranging future operations in the hours of travelling, and they soon show, by their answers, that their minds are fully occupied.

With regard to the almost universal custom of smoking in railway carriages in defiance of bye-laws and regulations, it may be a nuisance or not, according as it is persisted in. In a carriage where ladies are present it is never proposed; and in a carriage containing none but gentlemen it is put to the vote. The minority of one, who is not a smoker, gives in out of politeness to the wishes of his companions, and is never strong-minded enough to protest against the encroachment. Combination proves too much for the non-smokers, and very properly so. Until the latter have a sufficient regard for their own comfort and interest to invent and use a retaliative nuisance,—say an assafœtida pastile, for example,—they must suffer in silence. There is no help for those men, especially travellers, who will not help themselves.

Slumber is an excellent aid to the impatient traveller in helping him through his journey, but it must be used with care and moderation. Like all good things, it is liable to be indulged in too freely, and then it often interferes with the object it was intended to assist. I have known travellers carried past their destinations again and again, because they thought themselves capable of opening their closed eyes at a certain time. I have heard of one man who left London by a night-train to reach a particular spot in Kent, who was carried past this spot to Dover sound asleep, who started back by an early morning mail, who was again carried past his station fast asleep, and who awoke to find himself once more at the London terminus. This may be a travelling joke, but it is founded in some degree upon fact, and it conveys a useful lesson.

Those who are not familiar with the railway stations of their country, and are good sleeping travellers, should be warned of a few other shocks that may easily come upon them. A sleeping passenger, on his way from Glasgow to Loch Lomond, may be roused from his dreams by a Scotch porter, and told that he has arrived at Alexandria!

A similar passenger, on his road from Ayr to Dalmellington, may be similarly bewildered by hearing the name of Patna; and, rubbing his eyes, he may wonder whether he is in Egypt or the East, or whether Egypt and the East have removed to Scotland. In other parts of the United Kingdom he may be similarly bewildered with the Danish-sounding stations of Elsenham and Goathland; with the French-sounding stations of St Devereux and Plessy; with the Russian-sounding stations of Ulleskelf and Dromkeen; with the Spanish-sounding stations of Clonsilla, Torre, and Pontardulais; with the German-sounding stations of Helensburgh and Droylsden; with the Hungarian or Polish-sounding stations of Piel and Magerhafelt; and with the Italian-sounding stations of Eastrea, Aspatria, and Etruria. These are only a few out of many philological nightmares that may arouse the sleeping traveller at any moment, supposing the different local pronunciations to be tolerably intelligible.

The art of travelling in cabs is a much more simple matter, and it consists mainly in selecting a horse that will stand, a driver who does not look likely to become abusive, and in undoing all the work of meddling legislation. The whole rolling stock of the cab interest is rotting under Government protection. While the mileage rate is fixed by Act of Parliament, there is no legislative limit, on the other side, to the price of hay and corn, and no allowance made for the violent changes in the weather. Rain, snow, fog, may come and go, and still the paternal Government ordains that we shall travel for sixpence a-mile. Pentonville Hill, and other metropolitan mountains, shall be ascended at the same price, according to distance, as we pay for traversing a level, uncrowded road in the outskirts; and the passage from Holborn Bridge to the Brighton Railway, which goes up Snow Hill, through Newgate Street, Cheapside, and over London Bridge,—the four most crowded thoroughfares in the world,—is measured out under the same unbending scale of charges. The chief labour of the traveller in cabs is to discover and allow for these inequalities of the London streets and the London weather, and to make his peace with the over-regulated drivers. In Manchester, and other large towns, he gets a better vehicle, under free-trade, at about the same fares, and is saved all this terrible trouble of thinking.

The art of travelling in omnibuses requires a certain knowledge of localities, and a certain nimbleness in ascending and descending the roofs of these vehicles. In Paris, at the back of the 'knife-board,'

you are told, in dismounting, which foot to put down first; but this is another instance of a paternal Government watching over the smallest things, which I do not wish to see copied in England. There are not many steps from the regulation of omnibuses and their passengers, to the regulation of newspapers and periodicals; and social reform, as Milton would have said, becomes nothing but old despotism 'writ large.'

A traveller who rides much in London omnibuses will find them remarkably like certain lines of railway. He will see that the character of the vehicle is governed very much by the neighbourhood it runs to, and that the passengers vary with the different hours of the day. Coming from Hornsey, Highgate, Clapham, or Putney, in the morning about nine, he will find himself amongst men of business, rolling down to the City, and talking, it may be, of the treaty, or the Bank rate of discount. Going to Stamford Hill, or Highbury, in the middle of the day, he will find himself amongst rather serious middle-aged ladies, returning home from shopping, or other town duties. Coming from Brompton, about noon, he may join a few actors, rolling down to rehearsal; and going to Stepney, or Blackwall, about the same hour, he may find himself amongst sailors, captains, and ship-chandlers. Going to Greenwich, by the way of the Old Kent Road, about nine or ten o'clock at night, he may find himself in the middle of a few drunken pensioners, whose wooden legs are stuck across the vehicle, like the bars of hurdles. A wooden leg is a very difficult article to manage in a crowded omnibus—so is a warming-pan—a dragoon's sabre-sword, fixed uniform fashion—a basket of clothes going home from the wash—a wet umbrella—a spoiled child with gingerbread—an oilskin waterproof cape—and a large French clock. All these things, however, have to be tolerated at different times, with conductors who seem to keep all their small change in their mouths, and whose legs are so protected with many wrappers, that they can hardly feel the blows which warn them to stop. In all travelling by these vehicles, I counsel patience, good-humour, and politeness—the best manners of the first-class railway carriage. The lower the neighbourhood you are passing through, the more will this conduct be appreciated; and there is often more necessity for you to ride outside to oblige a working-woman in Shoreditch or Whitechapel, than a lady in Kensington or Bayswater. The latter may have a choice of vehicles; the first has none. So well is this understood by

the conductors of omnibuses on the common routes, that you will probably hear a conversation like the following going on over the roof, if you have not acted with the usual politeness :

Conductor to Driver. 'Bill, when's a man not a man?'

Driver to Conductor. 'Give it up.'

Conductor to Driver. 'When he won't get out to 'blige a female.'

In concluding my remarks upon land travelling, I may observe that night-trains for long distances—except for the post-office, luggage traffic, and passengers journeying under the spur of some sharp necessity—are a delusion and a snare. The time supposed to be saved by such travelling is never really saved; the traveller is exhausted for one or more days; and discovers, too late, that neither warm baths, strong tea, nor soda water, at repeated intervals, will make up for a lost night's rest. Excursion-trains of the wild order, such as go to Paris and back in three days, are another travelling mistake; for no men see so little of the world as those who hurry through it like steeplechasers.

BIRDS OF A CURIOUS PARADISE.

HAT we committed a great mistake when we left Mayfair, has always been my opinion, and I did not hesitate to tell Lady Barlow so, before we moved a single article of *vertù*. Her ladyship is my own sister, who married Sir William Barlow, Bart., and I reside with her and her daughter as a companion, to give them the benefit of my superior manners and education. Sir William Barlow, Bart.—my brother-in-law—is a large contractor, who builds a great deal, and all that sort of thing, and he is as obstinate as a mule when he once makes up his mind. I never interfere with him. If his own wife has no power to direct the movements of her household, it is not my place to step forward and occupy the throne she has abdicated. I tell my sister what I think is wrong,—I teach my niece, Miss Augustine Barlow, what I know is right; and I subside, after this, into a state of silent protest.

We left our small, but fashionable mansion in Half-Mooney Street, Mayfair, for a large, but unfashionable mansion, built, with many others, by Sir William Barlow, Bart., upon the great Gravel Estate at South Ditchwater. In Mayfair we were pressed close on every side, but the pressure arose from persons and places of the highest distinction; and though our conservatory at the back only looked out upon a Mews, yet there was an indescribable air of hereditary aristocracy always hovering over the stables and coach-houses. In South Ditchwater, which is at the extreme verge of fashionable London, we had plenty of space, but it was the expanse of a jungle,—the freedom of the desert. In one respect only had the designers of this neighbourhood followed the true Mayfair model. Everything had been sacrificed for frontage; and while the back was walled up and protected like a fortress, the effect of the planted squares and the Corinthian columns before the chief mansions was really far from contemptible. The difference in the size of the buildings, and the breadth of the street, deprived us for ever of a favourite amusement. We could not look into the drawing-rooms on the opposite side of the way, nor observe the morning calls that were made upon our next-door neighbours. This was particularly annoying, after we had succeeded in warming the wilderness into life, and had attracted numerous tenants, by our fashionable example, of the most faultless position and pedigree.

The Great Gravel Estate had all been bought by Sir William Barlow, Bart., and a few other gentlemen (so I was informed) for a mere song, except one dreadfully low and crowded locality which obstinately held out upon its leases, called Paradise Gardens. When the Great Gravel Estate was free, unoccupied land, and open to all, this court, alley, street, or whatever you may choose to call it, might have been more worthy of its name; but now that one end of the wretched colony was completely sealed up with lofty mansions—our own amongst the number—and its swarming inhabitants were driven into closer quarters by the destruction of their once ample outlet, there was something about the title of the place that struck me as being ludicrously inappropriate. So little did we consider it a paradise, that, looking down full upon it from our back conservatory and Miss Augustine's boudoir, we thought it best to have all the windows commanding that peculiar view glazed with coloured glass, so that the lower orders of society, when observed, could be observed through a highly-variegated medium.

Missing the bustle and excitement of Mayfair, and becoming tired of the monotonous stillness which reigned over the large square in front of the mansion, we transferred our daily sittings and our crotchet-work to Miss Augustine's boudoir at the back, although I should never have recommended Paradise Gardens and its motley life as a fit prospect for the constant contemplation of a young lady intended for an alliance with the nobility and gentry, if it had not been for the highly-variegated medium before alluded to. We were far above the high-conversation mark of our vulgar neighbours, and therefore our ears were not contaminated (when the windows were closed) with any improper language; while as to our eyes, a purple costermonger, or a grass-green sweep, were very different spectacles, to my thinking, from the ordinary beings of that kind whom we saw when we drove out in the carriage. Miss Augustine seemed highly amused with the animation that always governed the inhabitants of Paradise Gardens; and I did my duty by her—as a lady, a relative, and a Christian. I never lost an opportunity of impressing her with a feeling that she belonged to a totally different race of creatures.

Our Birds of Paradise, as we facetiously called them, were of many kinds.

There was one, of the female gender, whose presence was always made manifest to the whole neighbourhood, by the unbounded and loudly-expressed satisfaction of some hundred shouting children. She was always seen to the best advantage on rainy, muddy days, staggering slowly up the centre of the Gardens—with a battered bonnet; a dirty, ragged frock, half torn away from the waist, forming a wet and dismal train; and a shawl that clung to her shoulders with dumb, affectionate faithfulness. Her hair was always dishevelled, and partly hanging over her forehead; her face was sallow, bloated, and unwashed, except by the smoke-loaded rain; and her eyes were heavy, stupid, and glassy—in fact, gin-glassy. It wanted no second glance, no extraordinary intelligence, to see that she was either given to drink, or drink was liberally given to her. All the half-wild children of the Gardens, who lived chiefly in the open air, regardless of the changes of weather, watched for her appearance with eagerness, and deserted, for a time, their favourite dead dogs, dead cats, oyster-shells, and other playthings, to enjoy the luxury of pelting her with mud, and striking her hapless, broken-down, distorted bonnet. After a lump of dirt of more than usual size, or a blow of more than usual heaviness, had struck her, she turned round with a sleepy leer to face

her enemies, and looking at them for some little time, as if to fully realize their numbers, she glided into a helpless attempt to snap her fingers in the air. This act of defiance being exhausted, she lolled her tongue out of her mouth, and passed from that sign of contempt to a faint, incoherent scrap of song, and a few unsteady steps in the mud, intended for dancing. Sometimes she fell down on her side at full length, and sometimes merely on her hands and knees, and then a shout of intense joy rang out from the mouths of the delighted children who surrounded her. Her efforts to get up—an entangled bundle of dirty rags, as she was—were received with immense applause, especially when one or two of the assembled youths advanced and pretended to assist her, though really to drag her more thoroughly through the mire. This amiable amusement generally ended by the muddy, sloppy creature crawling her road to the dark open doorway of a hovel in one corner of the gardens, where she disappeared, in a manner that left it in doubt whether she had succeeded in doing more than depositing herself at full length in the narrow passage.

We had other varieties of birds, in our curious Paradise, to furnish ample material for observation.

There was a great number of large, powerful men, who wore their shirts outside their clothes, and whose heavy, thick boots were bound so tightly round their ancles that their legs looked like wooden legs. They seemed rather proud of this peculiarity, for their trousers were always rolled up, nearly to the knee, giving an uninterrupted view of a worsted stocking. They appeared to be of a deeply contemplative nature, for they stood in thick groups against the wall, or the posts at the entrance to the Gardens, for hours together, especially on a fine Sunday morning, never exchanging a word, as far as we could make out, and gazing vacantly at each other, or at each other's flaunting neckties. We found, upon inquiry, that these birds of Paradise were called 'navvies;' and, upon further observation, that they were not always so intensely peaceable in their demeanour. Sometimes, in the cool of a summer's evening, a crowd would be seen in the middle of the Gardens, swaying to and fro, and presenting many up-lifted arms, and many dancing women's heads. A great uproar was always heard on these occasions, which no closed windows could keep out, and which annoyed us very much when we had got a select dinner party. Men and women were knocked down, to get up slowly and stupidly, and be knocked down again; while two policemen, in full uniform, generally looked in at the entrance to the Gardens, as if to act as umpires in

the conflict. After a certain lapse of time—in most cases about an hour—a peace was concluded, and then a deal of unsteady shaking of hands took place, and much beer appeared to pass from pot-boy to hand, and from hand to mouth. On these occasions there was always a sound of revelry by night, and wild songs floated on the wind until a very early hour in the morning.

Another bird of Paradise, who seemed to be very popular in the Gardens, was a middle-aged drummer, who passed his time pretty equally between singing patriotic songs, going through the broad-sword exercise in the street, and smoking a black pipe, in true barrack fashion, hanging half out of window in his shirt-sleeves. His sole offspring—judging from appearances—was a short, large-headed boy, who, having recently joined the distinguished corps of which his father was a worthy member, became, through his costume, an object of intense interest to the swarm of other children, who always seemed vacantly thirsting for amusement and excitement. Both father and son had evidently taken the neighbourhood under their authorized protection; and while the former—especially in times of general war—that is to say, nearly every year—was rallied round, so to speak, by all the other birds of Paradise, and kept in a gentle state of perpetual drunkenness at the expense of the little community, the latter was forced to participate in all the sudden luxuries that fell upon the place, and he wanted for nothing, except a superhuman digestion.

The great characteristic of Paradise Gardens was perpetual life. Look at it at what hour you would—on what day you would—you could never accuse it of sleepiness. Children were always rolling in the dirt—always shouting and crying; dogs were always barking; women were always scolding the children—and sometimes, though not frequently, rushing madly at their noses to wipe them; and all kinds of wild music that enjoyed no patronage, or was ruthlessly moved on elsewhere, found refuge and reward in this court with no thoroughfare.

Because the population of the place was already not crowded enough, a feeble-minded cabman, who appeared to come home to dinner about twice or three times a-week, must bring his vehicle with him loaded with dirty children of the same peculiar Paradise species, whom he helped out with a ridiculous affectation of ceremony and politeness. Sometimes these children entertained themselves by breaking a few windows of the stately mansions which overshadowed them; and there was no remedy—not even the hope of ejectment—

until the wretched leases of this wretched colony had legally expired. Sometimes the creatures—to do them justice—were far more easily and harmlessly amused, and, in default of toys, they were content to play with the March wind; when it not infrequently blew a hurricane, from the main road, up the narrow entrance to the Gardens. A couple of small children—not older than two years each—were selected to stand the force of the tempest, and when a powerful gust came and blew them over, a shout of delight was heard, in which they appeared to join heartily with the others. The only time when anything like quietness reigned over the colony, was when the laundress's little boy had the typhus fever, and when the slightest noise was irksome to him as he lay in his bed a few days before he died. His mother's house was at the blocked-up end of the Gardens, close against our lofty wall and our next-door neighbours', Lord and Lady Lambswool's. Lady Lambswool had a valuable peacock in her conservatory—a splendid bird, but very much given to screeching; and when the laundress's child was lying in this hopeless state, brought on entirely by the dirt and filth which surrounded him, a few officious friends from the Gardens actually waited upon her Ladyship and requested the favour of the bird being removed or silenced! Whether the laundress herself had any hand in this audacious movement, we never knew; but she may thank the forbearance of her Ladyship and others that she did not lose what little superior custom she had in the district. One bold-speaking, dangerous individual, had the audacity, so I am informed, to tell her Ladyship's servants that Paradise Gardens were there long before the nuisance of the huge mansions on the Great Gravel Estate; and that they would bring an action against Lord Lambswool to-morrow, only his Lordship was far too rich to go to law with.

It was about this time that the Rev. Horatius Flaccus, the young rector at the church of St Stucco-in-the-Square, took to preaching, all at once, a kind of soup-and-flannel Christianity. His arguments about the duty of visiting the poor, and the efficacy of works as distinguished from a dry, unfruitful faith, did not, I must say, have much effect upon me; though they produced a deep impression on my niece, Miss Augustine.

'Aunt,' she said, one morning, to my utter astonishment, 'I'm determined to make a morning call in Paradise Gardens.'

'Augustine!' I returned with dignity, concealing my emotion, 'Nonsense! Stuff!'

'I've made up my mind, Aunt,' she replied, 'and you know what that means. We've been amusing ourselves with these poor people, and looking at them from a safe distance, through our illuminated glass, quite long enough. I'll see what they're like a little nearer.'

'Augustine!' I exclaimed, almost breathless, for I knew she was as obstinate as her father, 'this comes of indulging you with long mornings and evenings in your boudoir, instead of confining you to the tame insipidity of the front square. Haven't I taught you that these people are a different race of beings?'

'You have, Aunt,' she replied, 'and so has Lady Lambswool, by her treatment of them; but the Rev. Mr Flaccus teaches me differently, and I would rather believe him than a hundred aunts, and a thousand Lady Lambswools.'

When she had said this, she flounced out of the place to pursue her design, and I felt it to be my duty to follow her.

At the entrance to Paradise Gardens we found a man lying insensibly drunk against the wall, watched over by a couple of boys, who answered any questions.

'Why don't you have him taken home?' asked Miss Augustine, beginning her work of visiting in right earnest.

''Cos he's got ne'er a 'ome,' replied one of the boys; 'an' if he 'ad, he don't want to go to it.'

'Not want to go to it?' exclaimed Miss Augustine, in astonishment.

'No,' returned the same boy; 'he told me whenever I see 'im drunk, to take all the money out of 'is pockets, an' turn 'im agen the wall.'

'Yes,' chimed in the other boy, 'I 'eard 'im.'

We passed on with no very definite object or design, Miss Augustine first, and I following, until we entered the passage of the house in the upper story of which the laundress and her sick boy were living—or dying.

Miss Augustine appeared to be dreadfully shocked at the dirty state of the staircase, and she seemed to hesitate about going any further; but before I could avail myself of her wavering, and persuade her to turn back, the voice of the Rev. Horatius Flaccus was heard above, and in another moment he had descended the stairs.

'This is, indeed, an unexpected pleasure, Miss Barlow,' he said,

shaking my niece by the hand, and bowing to me; 'I scarcely hoped to find my teaching about the duty of visiting the poor so soon bearing such promising fruit.'

It was delightful to hear the Reverend Mr Flaccus speak, because he seemed as if his whole life was devoted to the aspiration of the 'h.' If he had been sinking in a wreck, and had made only one false aspirate in calling for help, I am convinced he would have settled down beneath the flood, rather than face the man who was the witness of his disgrace.

Miss Augustine, as I saw by her manner, was about to make some pretty, mincing reply to her pastor's remark, when a great uproar was audible without, which filled me with dread, when I considered the place we were in. Going to the door with many misgivings, we found a crowd of persons—the regular inhabitants of Paradise Gardens—looking with much enjoyment towards Lord Lambswool's house, where, almost as high as the lofty roof, a full-sized monkey was clinging to a rain-spout with one arm, and holding what appeared to be a china vase with the other.

It turned out, upon inquiry, that the animal belonged to a tramping showman, who was lodging in the place, and that it had escaped over the high wall which divided the mansions from the lower orders of society.

Lady Lambswool's appearance and remarks in her conservatory helped to clear up the rest of the mystery. She was a passionate, devoted collector of china, and the animal in entering the partly-opened window of a room on the ground floor, which contained her jealously-guarded treasures, had seized a Wedgwood vase of fabulous value—the only known specimen of its kind in existence. This was the priceless rarity which now hung suspended between heaven and earth in the arms of a scared and tricksy ape. A moment of breathless interest passed—during which, as we were afterwards informed, Lord Lambswool was busy in inciting his pampered menials to scale the roof—and down came the brittle product of the potter's highest skill, falling through the glass of the conservatory with a fearful crash. Lady Lambswool's head was saved at the expense of the screeching peacock, who was killed on the spot, while the monkey escaped over the roof, and was never seen (by us) again.

Lord Lambswool was in a dreadful rage—(a dangerous excess at his time of life)—cursing the proprietor of the unruly animal, who was too poor for his lordship to take his revenge at law. From this

I learned that extreme poverty, like extreme riches, is an insurpassable barrier against satisfactory legal proceedings.

What the combined residents and proprietors of the Great Gravel Estate intend to do with their troublesome neighbours after this unexampled and unexpected outrage, it is not easy to tell; for the typhus fever, introduced by the laundress's dead son, at the commencement of a very hot summer, began to spread with such alarming rapidity that the aristocracy—ourselves amongst the number—fled in dismay, for a time, leaving the field, or what ought to have been a field, in the hands of the birds of that curious Paradise, the doctors, and the Commissioners of the Board of Health.

THIRSTY SOULS.

CONVIVIAL drinking is certainly an enormous fact. Good or bad—right or wrong—there it is. In antiquity it can be traced back to the time of Noah; in universality it covers the whole civilized and uncivilized world. The bowl—such as it is—is pushed about in the loneliest cannibal huts of savage wildernesses; and if the red man was really exterminated by the introduction of fire-water, that fire-water was most probably an inferior liquor of his own creation. Under the influence of the inspiring fluid, the savage becomes as eloquent as his more cultivated brother. A North-American Indian, giving his opinion of brandy, said—'It is made of *tongues* and *hearts*, for when I have drunk of it I fear nothing and I talk like an angel.' The learned old Walter de Mapes, one time Bishop of Oxford, although he wrote in elegant Latin, could do no more than say something very like this—we quote from a recent clever translation by Mr Edward Draper—

> 'As each cup of wine I drain, so my wit increases;
> When in lack of food and drink, all my vigour ceases;
> But when once satiety my eager soul releases,
> Talk about your Ovids, sir, I beat 'em all to pieces.

I, when hungry, I confess, am far from an Apollo ;
When my stomach's empty, then my skull is also hollow ;
But when Bacchus to my brain sends the drink I swallow,
All mankind are startled at the miracles that follow ! '

Nature herself is undoubtedly on the side of the drinkers. Not only does 'the thirsty earth soak up the rain'—according to good Abraham Cowley—'and drink and gape for drink again ;' but it gives back as good or perhaps better than it takes. The Ballstone waters, in the State of New York, possess highly exhilarating qualities. The neighbouring farmers consider them an excellent beverage, and send for them from a distance of six to ten miles to refresh the labourers during haymaking and harvest-time, instead of using ardent spirits. Whether the labourers have as high an opinion as their masters of these samples of Nature's distillation, is not so clear ; but inebriety and drowsiness—not to mention vertigo—can be brought on by an over-indulgence in them. The Saratoga water—seven miles from Ballstone—is equally remarkable, and the quantity of gas it contains is such that breakfast bread is baked from it instead of yeast.

Germany boasts a spring of this kind, in the neighbourhood of Hirschberg ; and Tartary another, near the source of the Kuma and Podkumka.

In Ceylon, whole woods are set aside for no other purpose than that of procuring toddy—think of that ! This liquor is the juice of the cocoa tree and palmyra tree, which is distilled into arrack. The daily produce of sweet juice drawn from a tree is about three or four gallons, and it continues to flow for four or five weeks together. The native still, employed in the manufacture of arrack, is extremely rude, being made of earthenware, and looking like a warming-pan with two pipkins. The juice of the grape usually called *must* gives even less trouble in warm climates, as it ferments itself in a heat of about seventy degrees. Add to this many intoxicating herbs, but especially the poppy plant, from which opium is procured, and it will be admitted that Nature has provided inebriating stimulants to a very considerable extent.

Beer, wine, and spirits seem to be the three great divisions of convivial drink, and no country is so poor or so ignorant as to be without either the one or the other. How they are made is quite another matter, depending much upon climate, natural advantages or disadvantages, native taste, honesty, custom, and usage. The Mantchoo Tar-

tars, for example, the conquerors of China, prepare a wine of a very peculiar nature from the flesh of lambs, either by fermenting it, reduced to a kind of paste, with the milk of their domestic animals, or bruising it to a pulpy substance with rice. When properly matured, it is put into jars and then drawn off as occasion requires, and it has the reputation of being very strong and nourishing. Whatever remains after supplying domestic wants is exported into China or Corea under the name of *lamb wine*. The Chinese term for this liquor is Kan-yang-tsyew, and it is as great a favourite with the emperors as sherry was with George the Fourth. Of a similar description, perhaps, is the spirit made at Surat, denominated spirit of mutton, spirit of deer, spirit of goat, which derives its name from the practice of throwing into the still a joint of mutton, a haunch of venison, or a quarter of a goat.

Although it may seem strange that the convivial feeling can be kept up, even to the point of intoxication, upon a nutritious broth, the connoisseur in drinks may go further and fare worse. In Abyssinia, although he will be treated in the most hospitable manner, and entertained in every village at the joint expense of the inhabitants, when he comes to push the bowl about he will find it filled with gall. The natives, besides eating raw flesh and drinking warm blood of animals convivially, esteem the gall so highly that they drain glasses of it with as much pleasure as that with which Europeans drink the choicest wines. The Afghanistans prepare a strong drink from the milk of sheep, which is said to possess a very invigorating property. It is a great favourite with the people, although they are not wholly dependent upon it for a convivial stimulant, as the Greeks and Armenians who settled in the country distil spirits and make wine to a considerable extent. Of the Afghanistan grapes there are ten different kinds, and about Cabul they are so plentiful that cattle are fed on them for three months in the year. In the island of Madagascar, where Nature has been profusely liberal in her gifts, the natives are, for the most part, inclined to be temperate. The ordinary drink is hot water or the broth of boiled meat, except on occasions of ceremony and festivity, when wines of their own making are used. Among these wines, great quantities of *toak*—a liquor made from honey—are consumed, and those who drink most are considered to have done the greatest honour to the repast.

That the convivial spirit may be sustained upon almost any fluid or solid, and that intemperance may be shown in the use of temperate

liquors, is proved by the social habits and customs of the Kamtschatdales. They are extremely dull people, and as fond of the pleasures of the teapot as they are of the bottle. The first thing you must do, says an eminent traveller in Siberia, when you arrive at one of their houses, is to treat the family with tea; and he adds that he once saw a Kamtschatdale drink eleven half-pint bowls of it at a sitting, and afterwards declare that he could have completed the dozen had there been water enough in the kettle. This excessive love for tea is only surpassed by the Takuts, who drink an incredible quantity of melted butter. Some of them have been known to consume, at a wedding, from twenty to thirty pounds a man, contending with each other for pre-eminence in this greasy dissipation. What is still more singular, the master of a family considered himself honoured, and was delighted to see half-a-dozen of these great butter-drinkers come to his feast. Besides tea and butter, they are largely addicted to whisky and brandy; and they make use of a powerful beverage extracted from a red mushroom known amongst the Russians as a strong poison. This they ferment in a vessel with fruits, and scarcely give it time to clarify before they invite their friends to partake of it. The species of mushroom carried to Kamschatka is named *muchumor*, and, when boiled, communicates a strong intoxicating quality to the water.

In China, rice wines are largely manufactured, being drawn from rice of a particular description, different from that which is eaten. Some of these wines are so highly perfumed that on opening a bottle the air of the apartment assumes an agreeable fragrancy. This would hardly do for quiet drinkers who wish to indulge in secret. Captain Hall, when in Chili, met with a kind of lemonade, the scent of which filled the whole house. Palm-tree wines and quince wine, with a variety of different fruit liquors, are also favourite convivial stimulants in the Celestial Empire. An invitation to an entertainment is an affair of some ceremony, as the following copy of a note from a Chinese of consequence at Canton to a foreigner, inviting him to a marriage feast, will show :—

'To the great head of literature, venerable first-born, at his table of study. On the 8th day of the present moon, your younger brother is to be married. On the 9th having cleansed the cups, on the 10th he will pour out wine, on which day he will presume to draw to his lonely abode the carriage of his friend. With him he will enjoy the pleasures of conversation, and receive from him instruction for the well regulation of the feast. To this he solicits the brilliant presence of

his elder brother; and the elevation to which the influence of his glory will assist him to rise, who can conceive?'

The rice wines are all drank warm, as, indeed, is almost every other kind of fluid. A general opinion prevails that fermented and spirituous liquors, made hot, are not only more agreeable, but are preventatives of disease. In warm climates it is considered that heated beverages contribute to alleviate the sensations of fatigue.

In Lapland, brandy leaves its place at the festive board, and is largely employed in the important negotiations of life. When a young Laplander wishes to choose a wife, he must first furnish a friend with some bottles of this spirit, to mediate between him and her father, who is disposed to permit the visits of the lover only in proportion to the brandy he brings. This perquisite too often induces a parent to postpone the nuptials of a daughter for two or three years.

From the pleasure that brandy gives in this world, the Laplanders consider a little of it necessary for comfort in the next; hence they put into the coffin of a deceased friend a flask of this spirit, with other articles, in order that he may cheer himself on his journey.

The great Linnæus, in his tour through Lapland, because he found the inhabitants not sufficiently addicted to drinking, must teach them to make a kind of spruce beer from the tops of the fir, and show them how to render the sap of the birch available for a similar purpose.

Passing from Lapland across to Africa, it is curious to find similar drinking customs existing amongst several of the native tribes. The Bagos possess plenty of palm wine, and, as early matrimonial engagements are made amongst them, the betrothed parties are brought up together in the same house, from seven or eight years of age, and the male is enjoined to bring each day to the relations of his intended partner two calabashes of palm wine, one in the morning, another in the evening. His parents supply him with this until he is himself capable of making the wine. A tribe, called the Timannus, in the vicinity of Sierra Leone, not only employ palm wine in this manner, but use it as offerings to the dead. They deposit quantities of this liquor, as well as of solid food, in the charnel-houses, under the impression that they are necessary for the deceased in supporting their spiritual existence.

Punch might be considered the peculiar triumph of drinking civilization, did we not find its first principles familiar to the rude inhabitants of the Friendly, Society, Feejee, Sandwich, and Navigators' Islands. Here the *cara* plant—a species of pepper, cultivated solely

for convivial purposes—is carefully dug up, scraped clean with mussel shells, split into small pieces, distributed to the company who chew them into a paste, and collected again into a wooden bowl to have all the virtue squeezed into a certain quantity of water. This fluid is drank in silence out of banana-leaf cups, and a fair amount of stupefication is procured from the smallest quantity of drink.

Batavia, but for several drawbacks, would certainly be the drunkard's paradise. Here a man can get thoroughly intoxicated upon arrack for the small charge of a halfpenny; but the capital is so intersected with fœtid canals, and surrounded by stagnant marshes, that a night or two spent in the city often proves fatal to Europeans. There is also an unpleasant habit existing of putting every one found drunk at Batavia under the doctor's care, and these things almost counterbalance the delightful cheapness of its convivial drink.

Civilization has not got it all its own way, even in the remedies for drunkenness. If we attempt to sober a helpless bacchanal by copious doses of melted butter, the Japanese have learnt the art of counteracting their strong drinks by taking a fish-oil, called *todo-nooro*. If we undertake to cure inebriety on the *ad nauseam* principle, the Chilians have already done this, by mixing either powdered star-fish, or the perspiration of a horse, in the wine or spirits. Both of these things are said to produce an utter loathing for the liquor ever afterwards.

The best sobering machine, perhaps, ever used, was that invented by Lord Tyrawnley, during his residence in India, in order to punish inebriety amongst the troops under his command. It had a rapid rotary motion, and the offenders, being secured to its surface, were whirled round until they were restored to reason by repeated checks of the machine. Some such apparatus might be advantageously introduced at our police offices, to supersede the present fining system of 'five shillings and costs.'

Long before our criminals, on their way to execution, were regaled with a bowl of ale, the Indian widows, who sacrificed themselves on the funeral pile of their husbands, were sustained with immoderate draughts of wine and spirits. These were given in such quantities that few objects appeared terrific to the martyrs, and they went to the mound of faggots in a frenzy of excitement.

In Congo, the mode of serving liquor at a banquet may differ considerably from our own; but it amounts to the same thing in the end. There, the master of the ceremonies holds the moringo, or flask, to

the mouth of the person who drinks, and, when he thinks he has got sufficient, draws it away, and observes the same practice with all the other guests to the end of the feast. Here, our footmen—our masters of the ceremonies—are endowed with no such discretionary power; and the result is, that glasses are filled until their owners are sleeping over the table. In Congo, the natives are so fond of intoxicating liquors that they have been known to barter one of their own children for a bottle of brandy. In England,—if we are to believe the total abstinence advocates,—the same proceeding, in an indirect way, is of every-day occurrence. In Ashantee, a certain 'lord of the council' thought nothing of drinking fifteen gallons of palm wine before he went to bed; and England—not to be outdone by an obscure savage—can point, with pride, to a Mr Vanhorn, of modern notoriety, who consumed, in the course of three-and-twenty years, thirty-five thousand, six hundred, and eighty-eight bottles, or fifty-nine pipes,of port wine.

Looking at the subject of convivial drinking in a broad and philosophical sense,—surveying the world, in fact, both past and present, from China to Peru,—we are taught that, however mankind may differ in colour, geographical position, and religious belief, they all belong to the same great family when they come together over their cups.

SIXPENCE A MILE.

IT was during that uncommon foggy November (he began in rather a foggy voice) now nearly six years ago, that I was a-driving a four-wheeler with this old gray mare as I called *Sook*. I called her *Sook* after my old woman, whose name was Susan. She was a first-rate mare, she was, for she came out of a gen'elman's family. You don't often see horses like her, sir, in growlers. You didn't want any whip to her. Bless you, sir, she'd have broken her heart if she couldn't have done her ten mile a hour. She was one of Sir George Highlow's lot, and he knew a horse when he see one.

It was a very foggy month all through that November, but about

the two fogg'est nights was a Monday and a We'n'sday, nigh the middle of the month. It came on sudden about eight in the evening. I was a working up St John's Wood way on the Monday night, about six, when I turned on to a stand just off the upper part of the Edge'are Road. This stand was at the corner of a small street, and opposite a public-house, as is generally the case. Of course I went into the public to have half-a-pint; I might have been there a hour and I might have been two. When I came out you couldn't see across the doorstep for the fog, which had come on all of a sudden. It kept rolling along the street like smoke or steam, and was about the colour of Spanish liquorice or dark tobacco. As to seeing the cab or the old mare, that was quite out of the question, so I groped into the road and felt my way to her. There she was with her nose-bag on, just as I'd left her; the cloth on her back, and the cushions all right in the cab. Just as I was a-turning round towards the public again, guided by the light in the bar, which was like a child's Christmas candle, I came smack upon a young woman, quite a gal, with a white bundle in her arms, which turned out to be a baby.

'Oh mum,' she says, a'most shrieking, 'ere's a cab an' 'ere's a cabman.'

'Thank goodness!' says another female, a lady, a'most running into my arms.

'I knew there was awlus a cab, mum, somewhere 'ere,' strikes in the young woman; 'there awlus was when I was in service at Missus Davis's in the Grove,' just as if Sook and me had been a-standing there like stattys for sev'ral years!

However, to proceed. The lady says to me, through the fog, 'Are you the cabman of this 'ere cab?'

'Mum,' I says, 'I am.'

'Then,' she says, 'I want to go to Rarsberry Willar.'

'Mum,' I says, 'where may that be?'

'Oh! I forgot,' she says, 'Rarsberry Willar, Church Lane, Hupper Peck'em.'

'Hupper Peck'em,' I says, 'mum, is a pretty tidy distance such a night as this, and I doubt very much whether we shall ever reach it. Anyways, jump in.'

So I packed her with the maid and the babby, who was asleep, inside the cab, and getting a light from the public to a lamp that I'd got with me, we starts off for Hupper Peck'em.

Well, you know pretty nigh what driving a cab is on a foggy night like that. Sitting on the box and holding the reins was quite out of the question. Old Sook was a first-rater to find her way, but still I was obligated to walk at her head with the lamp. I couldn't make out half the time where we was. When I fancied we'd got to Charing Cross, we was about the middle of Regent Street. People kept shouting, and every now and then we got a bump from another vehicle, or got our wheels locked. Boys with links kept dancing about like young devils, and the public-houses were more use than chapels that night, acause they kept open to give a little light after the other shops was shut. Sometimes it seemed to get a little clearer, and sometimes to get a good deal thicker. Charing Cross, when we got to it, was a regular bewilderer. It was like plunging into a great sea of ink. It smelt so smoky, and felt so thick, that you could a'most fancy you were being smothered.

Well, we got through that and over Westminster Bridge, all right. I looked in the cab and found the baby still asleep, with a great shawl over its head. The young woman had also dropped off, and was a snoring like a stableful of horses. The lady was looking out, not at all in a fidget, as I should have expected, seeing that I might have Burked the whole kit, and nobody been any the wiser. Working across from the end of the Borough Road to the Elephant and Castle was another teazer, but we hit it at last, and in about another hour and a half we got to that part of Hupper Peck'em where the lady thought Church Lane ought to be. This was the toughest part of the job, for there was no signs of an open public-house, and no one to ask, and if we hadn't come smack upon a turnpike all of a sudden, we might have walked old Sook up and down until morning. Of course Church Lane, as the turnpike-man said, was right under our noses, and had been for some time, and after jolting over a lot of stones, and bumping against sev'ral trees —very foolishly planted along the curb—we came at last to Rarsberry Willar. I rung the bell, and in an instant it was answered by a servant and a gentleman in a dressing-gown. The gentleman seemed astonished to find his missus in the cab, expecting she'd have stopped all night with the baby at her aunt's, where she'd been to show the child, which was the first they'd had. The lady says :—

'Aunt never asked us.'

'Then,' says the gent., 'you don't go there again.'

Then the servant with the baby wakes up, and strikes in and says :—

'We got into the road, and we could not get a 'bus, 'cos they'd stopped runnin' in the fog, and I took missus and the baby down to a street I knew, where a cabman was awlus standin', as he used to be when I lived 'ousemaid to Missus Davis.'

By the time this general conversation was done we had all got into the Willar, and the gent. says to me :—

'Cabby, come in 'ere by the fire, an' 'ave a glass o' summat warm.'

'So I walked into a very comfortable parlour and took a seat, and the gent. mixes a good stiff glass of brandy-and-water.

'Now, cabby,' says the gent., 'your behaviour to-night is that of a reg'lar brick. 'You've walked all the way by the side of that cab to bring my wife and the infant safe home. Hacts of Parlyment is all my eye (those was his very words) in a case like this—so name your price, and it shall be paid at once.'

'Sir,' I says to that gent., 'I'd rather leave it to you.'

'No, cabby,' he says; 'you fix your figur', an' there's the money down.'

'Well, sir,' I says, 'I don't think three half-crowns 'ud hurt you. I've been four hours about the job, and——'

'Cabby,' says the gent., interrupting of me, 'don't say any more; you shall have six half-crowns, an' if I wants a cab for a day at any time, I'll send for you.'

So he pays me fifteen shillings like a nobleman, or like a nobleman ought to do but don't, and he gives me his card, and I gives him my name and address.

Well, I got home about half-after-four that morning, and I gave old Sook a good feed and a good shake down, and turned in myself for a good sleep, as I didn't intend coming out with the cab again until We'n'sday.

We'n'sday afternoon, about one, I turns out again with old Sook and the cab, to work down to my reg'lar stand. Just as I drives out of the Mews into Paradise Place, it comes on a heavy shower, and under a archway, by the Crooked Billet public-house, I see all those five young kids of Jim Dodds, standing up very muddy, without 'ere a hat or shawl amongst the whole bilin' of them.

'Hallo!' I says, getting off the box and going up to them, 'you young warmin, what d'ye do here?'

'Oh!' says the eldest, 'it's Bill Sammon.'

Then another strikes up, 'Give us a ride, Bill?' and they all got round me like a lot o' fowls.

'Well,' I says, 'jump in, you young warmin, it's six-a-mile, you know, and the driver expects something to drink.'

So I packs the whole five inside the cab, and two of the youngest were not very easy to dispose of, because they kept falling forward on their noses; and then I touches my hat to the two eldest, who was settling down like born ladies, and they burst out a laughing, while I took my seat, and drove the whole kit back to their parents. Just as I expected, there was Mary Dodds in a deuce of a stew, wondering where the whole family had got to, and very much obliged to me for bringing them home. Jim hadn't come in from work, so I wishes them good-day, and turns round again into the main thoroughfare. It's about a mile from this point to my reg'lar stand; so, instead of going back to that, I crawls up the side of the Curten Road, and was just turning round the corner into Washup Street, when a party hails me from the kerb.

Now I'm not very particular about fares—we can't afford to be in these times—but I certainly didn't like the look of this character at all. He was a man of about, say forty, this party, very pale-looking and fidgety, and biting his nails at a fearful rate. Well, this party hails me in the reg'lar way, and I pulls up. He opens the door at once and plunges in.

'Stop, stop!' says I. 'Where to?'

'Wes'minster,' he says, a biting his nails, 'but go to —— go to Islin'ton fust.'

Well, I thought he was a rum lot, but I drives on according to Act of Parlyment. It was nigh four o'clock in the afternoon when I reached the Angel at Islin'ton, and I looks inside the cab to know what next. The party was still biting his nails, and looking more fidgety than ever.

'Go to—go to—' he says, hesitating, 'go to Totting'em Cort Road.'

Very well, I thinks to myself, very well, my fidgety fare, you'll have to pay for all this. So I bowls the machine down Pentonweal 'Ill, and in course of time I reaches Totting'em Cort Road.'

'Now,' says the party, right in my ear, through the front glass, 'work for Wes'minster Habbey.'

I drove as I was told, without any remark, thinking the party either cranky, bad, or very undecided.

When we reached the Habbey, it was getting dusk, and they were lighting up the lamps in the streets, but it wasn't nigh dark. I looks to the party for further information, and he says, still a biting his nails,

'Work along the river, by Millbank, till I says stop.'

So I works along the river past the prison, and a very curious neighb'r'ood it is. I'd never been out in that part before, and I thought it wasn't a bad joke to learn my native city at six a mile, according to Act of Parlyment. There was the river on one side, looking very black and misty, as if another fog was brewing, which it was. On the other side was a lot of gasworks, saw-mills, and engines, a-going it like mad. The road was very black, with few lamps, and a lot of fag-ends of streets coming running into it upon arches, with enormous houses, not one quarter finished, and heaps of rubbish, and piles of wood. When we'd got round nearly as far as Chelsea, the party inside says, through the front glass as before :

''Old 'ard.'

I pulls up to receive further orders, when he says, pointing to a street, that went from the river into town :

'Hup 'ere to the top, and turn to the left,' and then he goes on a biting his nails as usual.

Well, I turns up the street, and did my best not to run over any of the children in the road, of which there was great numbers, and because it was getting dark. When I reached the top I came into a small square, that I'd never seen before, the houses of which was what I should call shabby-genteel. The party inside nudges me through the window to stop, and when I pulls up he gets out, looking as white as a turnip, and walks along the side of the square, motioning me to follow. He goes up to one of the houses and opens the door with a latch-key, going in quietly and shutting the door after him. When I drives up and takes my position in front of the house, I see a female party staring at me very hard through the curtains.

It was now quite dark, and another fog was coming on, or perhaps the same fog was returning from other parts. I hadn't been

paid my fare and I hadn't had any instructions, so I makes myself and Sook comfortable and waits to see what I was to do next. I plants myself a-top of the box, from which I could a'most see into the first-floor of the house where the party had gone in. The windows came down to the floor, and opened into a very small balc'ny. There was no blinds to the windows, only curtens, and there was no fire or light in the room. P'raps I'd been there a hour or a hour and a half when I see two folding-doors open at the back of the room, which threw a light into the place for an instant, until they were shut. Then a tall woman comes across to the window and puts it open, and sits herself down a looking at me. I didn't much like the look of the party I'd taken to the house, but I certainly didn't like the look of this woman half as well. She leaned her face upon her hand and kept staring at me till my blood almost began to curdle, and I thought of throwing up my fare and driving off as fast as Sook would carry me. She had fierce black eyes, and they glared at me like your own eyes do if you stare at them long enough in a looking-glass. I couldn't reckon her up, at all. I didn't think she was cranky, like the other party; she looked too firm and stern for that, and yet I felt that something was wrong. While I was a fidgetting in this way, the street-door opened, and my fare made his appearance, paler than ever, and in too much of a stew to bite his nails. He beckons me into the passage, and though I didn't like it I went, because I expected to be paid.

''Elp us out with this box,' he says, 'as quick as you can, and put it outside the cab.'

It was a very tidy-sized trunk, not far short of the length of a coffin, but much deeper and full as broad. It stood in the passage nigh the parlour-door, and it was so heavy we could scarcely lift it. How we got it on the top of the cab I can hardly tell, for it made the whole vehicle shake, and old Sook snort in her harness. I looked up at the first-floor window, and there was the woman with the fierce eyes still staring down at the cab. My fare goes back and shuts the street-door without making any noise, and if it had not been for the strange woman looking on all the time I should have supposed he was bolting off with property as wasn't his. He takes his place in the cab and tells me to drive round the Square into a road on the other side, then to turn to the right and keep straight on until he cries ''old 'ard.' Of course I does as I was directed, according

to Act of Parlyment. The gent wasn't drunk by any means, and I'm not allowed to refuse any fare as can stand on his legs and swear he's sober.

Well, to proceed. We hadn't got far down the road, the fog coming on thicker and thicker, when my fare shouts through the glass, into my ear, 'old 'ard.' I pulls up, and a tall female, well muffled, comes from the side of the road and gets into the cab, and my fare shouts again, 'Go on to the top and turn to the left.' I drives on, and I soon fancied the party we'd picked up was the strange woman with the fierce eyes, and the idea made me feel rather nervous.

The fog now got as thick as it was on the Monday night when I took the fare to Hupper Peck'em, and although I couldn't make out exactly where we was, or where we was going to, it struck me very forcibly that we must be a-working down to the river again. I couldn't make up my mind that things was all right inside the cab, and I think if I'd come across a station-house, I should have turned the whole lot out at the door, and took the consequences. The further I went down this road, the blacker it became, and I couldn't hear on any side a sound of living creature, except the voices of the two fares in the cab, who seemed to be a-quarrelling. I never was in such a position before in my life, and I never want to be again. If old Sook and the cab had been my own I think I should have bolted off and left the whole property to the pair inside. I fully expected to be murdered by them, and though I felt I could tackle the man if I'd only got him to deal with, I didn't at all relish the woman. Although there was no other carriages on the road or lane down which we was going, still I was obliged to creep along slower than a funeral, for fear of accidents. I didn't get down and lead old Sook, but gave her a slack rein, and let her go on her own way. While we was feeling every inch of the road, my male fare gets out and mounts the box aside of me, quite against my will, you may be sure. I couldn't see his face, and I couldn't tell whether he was a biting his nails or not, but his voice sounded very hoarse and trembling when he spoke, as I then thought with the cold.

'Ow far is it from the road at the bottom?' he says.

'Well,' I says, 'you know more about that than I do. This is your road, not mine.'

I said this to him, although I was in a stew, for I began to get rather sulky.

'We can't be far from the river,' he says again, speaking more to himself than to me.

I was about to make a remark in reply, when I feels the reins snatched out of my hands, and the next moment I gets a lift against the shoulder, which sent me a-spinning into the road. As luck would have it, I wasn't hurt, although a little stunned and shaken, thanks to the dry ditch in which I fell, and I heard the woman's voice sing out, 'Drive on, quick,' in a loud, sharp style, and afore I could get up and run after old Sook and the cab, they drove away at a awful pace, and the sound of the wheels and hoofs was soon lost in the fog and distance.

The first thing I did when I got up was to reckon about the time, and I made it out to be nigh nine. The next thing I did was to call myself a ass for taking such a doubtful fare, and the next thing I did was to blow up the Act of Parlyment sky high for forcing me into such a precious mess. After I had eased my mind a bit, I began to grope my way along the lane in the direction of the river, and in about half a hour I got to the end of the lane. I turned to the left, according to the instructions which I remembered was given me by my precious fare. I didn't seem to be any better off along here than up the lane, except that I knew I was on a line with the river. Of course I didn't venture on the side where the water was, being ignorant of the ground, but I sticks close to the walls and trees on the town side. And so I kept groping along, sometimes getting a shake by falling in a hole, and sometimes getting a fall by tumbling over a heap of dirt or a lump of stone. I must have spent a couple of hours in this way without meeting a living thing, until I came to a black building as went tapering up like a mountain, looking very mysterious in the fog. It turned out to be a large cement works, and while I was creeping along to see if I could find any door to knock at and ask my way, I comes plump upon the very watchman put in charge of the place.

'Halloo!' says he.

'Halloo!' say I.

'What d'ye want 'ere?' says he.

'Well,' says I, 'I'll soon explain all that,' and I told him through the fog the whole affair.

'This is a rum start,' he says, 'as ever I heard tell on. There's bin no cab by 'ere to-night, that's very certain. I tell you what you want, young man, you want a watch-'ouse.'

'Yes,' I says, 'exactly.'

'Yes,' he says again, in the dark, for I couldn't see his face, 'you want a watch-'ouse. Let's see; do you know Carter Street, nigh White and Stoneleigh's gun mannyfact'ry?'

'Gawd bless you,' I says, 'I don't know an inch afore my nose in this blessed nay'brood.'

'Ah,' he says, 'I'm sorry for you, 'cos you see, I'm the watchman 'ere, and can't leave. Owsomdever, you keep close along this 'ere wall until you reach some small 'ouses; then keep close along the 'ouses until you get to the Red Lion Tavern, about half way down the street. It may be open and it may not; but if it is open, ask the pot-boy, and if it ain't, go right across the road and down another street, which is Carter Street, and about forty doors down you'll find a lamp stickin' out from a 'ouse, which is the watch-'ouse I'm speaking of.'

With that he puts my nose in the direction he spoke of and starts me off. I gropes down the street, and I finds the 'Red Lion' shut up and gone to bed—a very early house, I suppose, and after some trouble I finds Carter Street opposite, and then I feels my way along the walls to the watch-'ouse. When I gets there I finds two policemen and one inspector.

'Now then,' says the inspector, a-looking at my badge, 'eighteen 'underd and fifty-four, what's the matter with you?' The two policemen had a grin at this.

'Oh, a good deal, sir,' I says.

'Werry well, eighteen 'underd and fifty-four,' says the inspector again, 'out with it.'

So I tells my story once more, and it was entered in a book, and then the inspector looked at the two policemen, and the two policemen looked at the inspector, and then the whole of them turned round and looked hard at me.

'This is a most extraordinary story,' says the inspector, 'and we can't do anything until the fog blows off, which may not be afore morning. Eighteen 'underd and fifty-four, you must stop 'ere all night—a most extraordinary story.'

I wasn't sorry to stop all night by the watch-'ouse fire, though

I found out afterwards that they wouldn't a let me go if I'd wanted to.

In the morning, about eight, the fog cleared off, and it was something like daylight by half-past. Then the inspector starts off with two policemen—not the two as was there when I went, 'cos they all kept changing during the night—and I goes with them to show them over the ground. We soon gets up to the Cement Works, and round by the river-bank, the distance seeming nothing now it was daylight. We hadn't gone far in this direction, keeping a sharp look-out right and left, when we comes to a part of the bank where there was no wall, and nothing but a slope of stones and gravel running down to the water's-edge. Looking down this place, as much by chance as anything else, what should we see but poor old Sook, standing up a-shivering in the mud, very dirty, very much bruised, and very miserable, with the harness half broke and a-dangling about her legs. A little further on was the blessed cab—number four thousand one hundred and eighty-five—a-laying topsy-turvey in the water, with the shafts snapped off, and the sides all in splinters. It was enough to break a fellow's heart, as I told the inspector.

'Stop a minit, Eighteen 'underd and fifty-four,' he says, 'stop a minit, p'r'aps there's summut wus.'

Saying which he goes down to the cab, and looks in, followed by me and the two policemen.

'Thirty-seven,' says the inspector to one of the policemen, 'go and fetch a stretcher.'

Thirty-seven starts off at once, and then the inspector says to me, very solemn indeed:

'Eighteen 'underd and fifty-four, this is a wery ugly bus'-ness.'

'What game's up now?' I says.

'Look 'ere,' he says, and he points inside the cab.

I looks in, and there I saw a dead body. The face was turned upwards, and was very wet and dirty and bruised, like Sook, but, for all that, I saw it was my male fare, as led me such a dance the night afore. It made me feel quite sick, and I turns to the inspector and says:

'There's a' end of all animosity between me and that party, anyhow.'

'Eighteen 'underd and fifty-four,' says the inspector, looking at me very hard, 'you must consider yourself in custody.'

Before I could ask what for, the other policeman whipped on a brace of handcuffs, and I was a pris'ner.

'Now,' says the inspector, 'let me caution you that what you says to me will be used as evidence agen you; at the same time, if you've got any accomplices, and you likes to confide in me, I can do a great deal with the proper authorities.'

Having said that, he takes me a little further along the bank, where we finds the great trunk that I'd helped the dead man to put on the cab last night. It was broken open, and a few things was left inside, clothes and such articles, but nothing like the stuff as must have produced the weight that I felt when I lifted it.

'It's that awful woman,' I says to the inspector, 'as has done all this.'

'P'r'aps so, Eighteen 'underd and fifty-four, p'r'aps so,' says the inspector. 'And you shall have every chance to clear yourself. I think we'd better go on and find that 'ouse in the square you spoke of, while these men take charge of the prop'ty and the co'pse.'

Four policemen had, by this time, come down to the spot, and leaving three of them in charge of the things, the inspector led the way, with me and the other two.

'Give old Sook a rub down and a feed,' I says, as I was a-going away; 'she's a first-rate old mare, and ain't quite broke up yet.'

Off us four trudged by the side of the river and up the lane which I described, and in about a hour we reached the square, with a small mob at our heels, which made me feel very uncomfortable. It didn't take us long to find the house, for the house was looking out for us. It was let out in lodgings, and the landlady, with her family, her servant, a lodger, sev'ral neighbours, and a doctor was up-stairs a-consulting in the first-floor.

When we went into the room, the sight of the inspector seemed to be quite a relief to them all, and they gathered round him, everybody speaking at once. At last a little order was produced, and then the doctor tells the inspector that an old man is lying dead in the next room.

'I can't undertake to say positive,' says the doctor, 'that any downright violence has been used, but it's a case of very gross neglect, and we must have a inquest.'

'No doubt of it,' says the inspector. And then he walks into

the back room with the doctor, and then they comes out again, and then the inspector asks the landlady a few questions about the woman with the staring eyes.

'Well, sir,' says the landlady, a-speaking very fast, 'she was no fav'rite of mine from the fust. She came here with the old man, as was her uncle, an' took the rooms; and though they paid their rent very reg'larly, they wasn't nice people to speak to; they never said good morning when they met you on the stairs, an' a nephew used to come, the brother of the woman, who was more fidgety an' disagreeable than she was; and they do say that the old man 'ad a daughter that he wouldn't see, because she'd married somebody he didn't like, an' he took up with this nephew and niece instead, an' then he fell ill, an' Doctor Borax 'ere was called in, an' his niece was the nuss, an' nicely she nussed 'im, though it served 'im right ——'

'Stop, stop,' says the inspector. 'You'd know the brother of this woman if you see him?'

'Yes, sir,' says the landlady.

'Werry well,' says the inspector, 'one thing at a time. 'Ad the old man much prop'ty about 'im at any time?'

'Can't say, sir,' says the landlady.

'Who was in the 'ouse 'ere last night from five to eight?' says the inspector.

'No one, sir,' says the landlady, 'except the old man an' his niece, an' our servant-of-all-work 'ere, Ellen Jane. We was all at a party.'

'Ellen Jane,' says the inspector to the servant, 'was you in the 'ouse from five to eight?'

'No, sir,' says the servant, a hesitating a good deal, 'I don't think I was.'

'You don't think you was,' says the inspector, a-putting of everything down, as he did from the very first, 'how was that, Ellen Jane?'

'Well, sir,' says the servant, 'I will tell the truth, if I never eats another meal of wittals in this house. After tea, the young 'oman, the niece of the old gent, comes down into the kitchen an' says, "Ellen Jane, I shall not want you until supper-time, which is nine o'clock, you can go out if you like." "Thank you, miss, I says, I will avail myself of your kindness," and out I went, which is the gospel truth, if I'm discharged without a carakter.'

'The missus looked very savage when she heard this, but the inspector stops what she was a-going to say by putting some more questions to her.'

'What was the name of the old gent who's dead?' says the inspector.

'Mr Lawrence,' says the landlady.

'What was the name of the young woman, his niece?' says the inspector.

'Miss Blackburn,' says the landlady.

'An' the brother who came here; his name, o' course, was Mr Blackburn,' says the inspector.

'O' course,' says the landlady.

'Do you know the name an' address of that daughter of the old gent which he wouldn't see?' says the inspector.

'I don't remember 'er name,' says the landlady, 'though I should know it if I heard it, but 'er address is somewhere in Hupper Peck'em.'

'Thanky,' says the inspector, shutting up the book in which he'd been a writing, 'and now, if you please, we'll go down to the station-'ouse.'

Then he puts me and the two policemen into a cab, and takes Doctor Borax and the landlady with himself in another cab, and in a few minutes we finds ourselves at the Carter Street watch-'ouse again. The cabman looks very melancholy at me when he sees me get out with my badge and the handcuffs on, and shakes his head. The first thing I asks about is old Sook, and I finds her put in a back-yard with a feed of corn given her in a washing-tub upon a dust-bin. When I asks if her knees was broke, no one could tell. Policemen is all very well, but they knows no more about horses than I do about a pianner.

Well, to proceed. As soon as we got inside the watch-'ouse, the inspector says to the landlady, 'You think the old man's daughter's name was summut like Penwiper, an' she lives at Hupper Peck'em?'

'Yes, sir,' says the landlady.

'When I hears a name like Penwiper, and Hupper Peck'em, it struck me it was very much like the name of the party as I'd drove over in the fog on Monday night.'

'Did you want a party at Hupper Peck'em with a name summut like Penwiper?' I says to the company.

'Yes, Eighteen 'underd and fifty-four,' says the inspector, for no one else would speak to me as I'd got handcuffs on.

'Then,' says I, 'have the goodness to feel in my breast-pocket, and you'll find a card done up in a 'backer-box as may give you some information.'

So the inspector looks, and he finds the card the gent gave me, and he reads, 'Mr Penfold, Rarsberry Willas, Church Lane, Hupper Peck'em.'

'That's the name,' says the landlady, 'if they're not robbed and murdered,' and she looks at me.

'Then,' says the inspector, entering the name and address in his book, and calling a policeman, 'you take a cab and go as fast as you can to this 'ere place, and fetch Mr or Mrs Penfold, or both on 'em.'

The policeman starts off, and then the inspector takes us into a inner room, where Mr Blackburn's dead body was laid out on a table.

'Now, mum,' says the inspector to the landlady, 'do you know this party?'

The landlady goes up to the table very reluctantly, a-holding a hankercher to her nose and pretending to be very faint, and she says:—

'I do.'

'It's Mr ——?' says the inspector, a-waiting for her to fill up the name.

'Mr Blackburn,' said the landlady.

'Good,' says the inspector, 'that'll do. I must trouble you for your name and address.'

The landlady didn't like this at all, but she was obliged to give it, even to her Christian name, and age, and occupation.

'Now, doctor,' says the inspector to Doctor Borax, 'we'll leave you to examine the body.'

Then we goes out again into the other room and waits nigh an hour, at the end of which time the doctor comes out and speaks to the inspector.

'I can't undertake to say positive,' says the doctor, 'that any downright violence has been used to that party, 'cos you see he fust of all 'ad broke 'is neck, and he may 'ave bin put into the cab out of the way; but we must have an inquest. While the inspector was a-taking of all this down, a man comes in dressed like a coal 'ever, and he goes up to the inspector and says:—

'We've found a good deal of the property out of that box—plate and things—a little further along the bank, under some stones and grass.'

'Good,' says the inspector; 'an' it's in your possesshun?'

'It's in my possesshun,' says the coal 'ever, who was nothing but a policeman done up in disguise.

'Any signs of the woman, Miss Blackburn?' says the inspector.

'Not at present,' says the coal 'ever. While this interesting conversation was going on in a low voice, a cab drives up to the door, and in rushes Mr Penfold, the gent as I'd taken brandy-and-water with at the Willar, along with his missus, who was crying.

'Halloo, cabby,' he says to me in a loud, cheerful style, and he comes forward to shake my hand.

'Here,' says he to the inspector, 'take off these stoopid things,' meaning the handcuffs, 'there's nothing agen him, it's all right.'

'Well,' says the inspector, taking off the handcuffs, much to the alarm of the landlady, who got very close to the wall, 'I don't think there is, now, but we're always obliged to be on the safe side.'

'I'll be answerable,' says Mr Penfold. 'All right,' says the inspector.

Then Mrs Penfold came up and asked how I was, and then she began to cry, and told me it was her father who was dead in the Square, and her cussen who was dead in the watch-house, her other cussen who was missing, and that it was her father's property as had been run away with, and that her father was very eccentric, and kept pretty well all he had in a box under his bed, and that he wouldn't see her 'cos she'd married Mr Penfold, and whenever he thought she'd found out his lodging he was sure to move, and it was her aunt near the Edge'are Road who'd let her go out in the fog with her baby, who was the mother of the two cussens, one dead and the other missing, and she told me a lot of other things right off, that let me into the whole fam'ly history.

They had a double inquest in a few days, but it didn't make anybody any wiser, as ever I could hear. A good deal of the property was found hid under the stones and grass on the river-bank, as the coal 'ever policeman had said, and it was handed over to Mr Penfold, who made me a tidy present, but they never came across the missing woman. The coal 'ever policeman and others watched on the river-bank for a long time, supposing she might come back for the property hidden under the stones, but she never did, and they never heard on her from that day to this.

THE MAN BEHIND MY CHAIR.

THE man behind my chair, the man in livery, the gaudy bondsman, the stiff, silent, watchful changer of plates and wine-glasses: footman, flunkey, lacquey, valet, call him by what name you will, to me he is an incubus in plush—a powdered Mephistopheles, a sword of Damocles, hanging by the frail silken cord of wages, food, and clothing at my side. I may command his bodily movements; he is bound to minister to my mechanical wants; he contracts to attend to the slightest manifestations of my alimentary desires; his every look and gesture are rendered as per agreement. I hold no conversation with him, nor he with me. I am instructed to ignore his intellectual existence. He conveys to me gently the delicacies of the season. He enlivens me with sparkling champagne. He tones me down to calmness with fine, old, crusted port. I thank him not by word or sign; and, so far, he appears to be my helpless, hopeless slave. But, if the thin veil that hides my mental sufferings is lifted off, it will be found that he is the master, and that I am the bondsman; that although I am allowed to direct his physical movements, I cannot touch that impalpable essence of his that is termed the mind; yet he possesses the power to influence my every thought, my every word, my every gesture. Train myself as I will, I cannot forget that a human (not very powerful it may be, but still human) intellect is going deliberately over every word of my conversation, criticizing, to the best of its ability, my opinions, my prejudices, my selfishness, my frivolity, and even the very language in which I express them.

Perchance it may happen that the kaleidoscope of society has, in its revolutions, deposited me next to one of those men at the dinner-table whose names would look well in the prospectus of a public company, and whose capital would be useful in developing that company. It does not matter how, to what extent, or in what

manner I am interested in the progress of that company. I advocate its commercial and other advantages to the best of my ability, checked, as I am, by the stern, unbending guard kept over me by the liveried sentinel of fashion. There is a secret and painful understanding between the watchful footman and myself. He is familiar with all my arguments in favour of Welsh slate as a perfect El Dorado of remunerative enterprise; he has heard them so frequently in the pauses between the courses, that he could repeat them mechanically as glibly as I do, and probably with about an equal result. He knows how I regulate my remarks to suit the character, the experience, the supposed strength or weakness of my listener; he learns how one man is governed by the mere greed of quiet, unostentatious gain in the shape of excessive dividends; how another is led on by the pictures of unbounded patronage, social dignity, and power of command which I dangle before his eyes. Much there is that the observing flunkey cannot fail to learn from what he hears; more there would be if his presence did not act as a restraining influence, impairing my force, and limiting my means of persuasion.

It is not only in affairs that chiefly concern the pocket that the influence of the man behind my chair is felt. The social kaleidoscope may place me by the side of one of those fair, young, gentle creatures who seem like angelic beings of another world, condescending for a brief period to grace by their presence the festive boards of this. I may be emboldened, by the absence of the legally constituted guardian of the lovely being—separated from us as she is by a dozen intervening table-ornaments—to pour into her ear a conversation more tender than I should have done, had the eagle-eye of that guardian been fixed upon us from an opposite chair.

But what avails it that I am favoured by fortune in the front, when I am cursed by an adverse fate from behind? Every word that I utter has to be filtered through the listening ear of the man behind my chair; every word that I receive in reply is modified by that maiden-modesty which shrinks from the rude contact of another and an uncongenial soul. Between me and the object of my heart's dearest affections stands the full-blooded bodily barrier of a pampered menial. He has eyes to see; he has ears to hear; but he has no tongue wherewith to speak. His silence is awful. I have no means of judging what thoughts are coursing each other

through that busy, feeble brain. Such thoughts are secrets that we carry to the grave.

It may be that I am shuffled down beside a distant relative, whose property in the funds is something fabulous—whose tottering frame is nearly ready for the family vault—whose tremulous hand can scarcely perform the necessary duties of the table. If left to the natural impulses of my character, I should do all in my power to make the most of my position; to render myself agreeable by a thousand well-calculated, well-timed, attentions; a thousand delicate, thoughtful, and sympathizing inquiries. But even here, in the sacred precincts of my own family circle, the man behind my chair steps in, robs me with his hireling legerdemain of my long-sought opportunity of assisting my helpless kindred, and freezes the fountain-spring of my over-gushing affection.

I may be seated next to one of the most influential members of the Government. I may be fully aware of the benefit that would arise to that Government, and to my beloved country, by my great, though long-hidden, administrative talent; but, while the accursed shadow is thrown across my plate, from behind my chair, my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth. I lose the power of speech. The goblet of overflowing patronage bubbles up to my lips; but, like the wretched Tantalus, I cannot drink.

Why should the conventional requirements of misguided splendour inflict these gilded incubi upon us; who make more unendurable the dull talk, and who stimulate the natural indigestion of the dinner-table? Is it not enough that every distinguished dining-room is filled with goggle-eyed family portraits, who glare upon every morsel of food which the unhappy visitor conveys to his lips? Is it not enough that debateable works of art—supposed to be by some of the oldest of the old masters—are hung up full in the faces of the masticating victims, to excite the critical faculties, and to keep the judgment in an unwholesome state of ferment, at a time when the mental organization should be at rest, and the attention devoted solely to what are miscalled, but which might really be made, the pleasures of the table? Is it not enough that all these disturbing pictorial influences should be crowded upon the walls of luxury, making them more unendurable than the bare black stone barriers of a county jail; but that, behind every man's chair, should be stationed a conversation monitor in silk stockings—a braided embodiment of accusing conscience—a sleek, oily, well-fed, easy-

minded, fat-accumulating, non-tax-paying witness, who, for some mysterious reason, receives a yearly stipend, and a yearly board, in return for taking up a position where the whole panorama of life passes gently before him; where he can listen to wisdom out of the mouths of rakes and worldlings; and where he can gather the rich results of hard-bought experience, gained by those who have boldly leaped into the ring and fought the battle of life, while he is always a calm and undisturbed spectator of the contest? If it be absolutely necessary for the proper distribution of the feast that some attendance should be given to the assembled guests, let as much as possible of this service be provided for by mechanical arrangements. Dumb waiters they all are; but the genius who should invent an automaton footman would deserve the honours of the Bath.

THE PET OF THE LAW.

VER since I can remember, up to the period when I reached fifty years of age, I was a thief; not an amateur occasional thief, not one of those impulsive fallen respectabilities who do some piece of inartistic crime, and then are sorry for it; but a regular professional trained thief, who was, and is still, proud of his profession. I believe my family, on the mother's side, is related to the great Jerry Abershaw, so I have an additional warrant for my pride; my paternal grandfather was hanged, and died game, at Tyburn; and there is a ballad about him, which I sing when I am in the humour. My father and mother are both in Hobart Town; my father was transported for burglary; and my mother, who had saved a good sum of money, went out there as a settler, and, oddly enough, hired my father as a gardener—or something of the sort—from the authorities. Every three months, I believe, she sends in a certificate of his good behaviour to the governors of the penal settlement, and he is allowed, in consequence, to remain unmolested in his servitude.

I am married, and have four children, three boys and a girl, all

thieves, and all, I am happy to say, at this present time doing well. The girl, aged nineteen, has a decided talent for shoplifting, and I have had proposals for her hand from a celebrated housebreaker (I must not mention names), which I shall certainly accept, as it will be a very good match. I have also apprenticed my youngest boy, aged twelve, to this artist, to learn his branch of the trade, and I hear very satisfactory accounts of the lad's progress. My next boy, aged fifteen, who has taken quite naturally to the pickpocket and church business, has just returned, after a twelvemonth's imprisonment in the Model Prison, as plump as a butcher, and looking as if he had been at the sea-side for a long season. My eldest son, aged twenty-two, is out on a ticket-of-leave, and we often talk together about the way in which he interested the chaplain in his welfare. He said he thought he could be of immense service in trying to convert his family from the evil course they had adopted, and the chaplain and the governor of the prison—a governor of the new school—thought he could. To do the young man justice, he mentioned the subject once or twice when he came home; but I think he broke down when he pretended to prove to his sister, in the presence of the chaplain, that needlework was, in the long run, more profitable than shoplifting. What effect his arguments might have had if he could have devoted more time to enforcing them, I cannot tell; but he is out a great deal, especially at night, and is doing very well, to judge by the money that I have seen him with lately. The rumour that he was the man who gave the gentleman that ugly blow the other night in the fog, I treat with the contempt that it merits. A man is innocent until proved guilty before a jury of his countrymen. My wife is not altogether undistinguished in the profession (you may remember the great plate robbery at Lord Mumblepeg's, in which she was concerned), but I will not dwell upon that. I did not marry her for her virtues, nor her talents, but to secure her from coming against me as evidence at any time.

Our business—the business of thieving—does not differ from any other business in which the profits are high and the risks proportionately great. We go into it, knowing exactly what forces are arrayed against us. Some men prefer the army; some, gold-mining; some, the excitement of the Stock Exchange; some, the delirium of the turf. I, and a very numerous body of fellow-professionals, prefer thieving. It is not my place—although I have

retired with a comfortable competency from the trade—to make any disclosures that would lead to greater stringency in the law, and greater severity towards us on the part of its administrators. I have a family to bring up, and my duty to them imposes upon me a certain reserve; but still, the gratitude that I feel to the public, the law-makers, and the judges, for all their kindness and consideration for our class—their love of what they call fair-play, their respect for the time-honoured maxim of 'honour among thieves,' and their hatred of anything un-English—impels me to undeceive them upon some points.

In the first place, we are not a miserable class, hunted from house to house, squandering ill-gotten gains in a reckless, ignorant manner, and seeing the frowning face of offended justice ever at our heels. That face may appear very stern to the amateur vagabond, but it has no terrors for the regular thief. He has learnt to measure it at what it is worth; to strip it of its theatrically awful trappings and adjuncts; to lay bare the springs that move the fettered machine, and to hear in the mimic thunders of its voice the mandates of a law in which consideration for the thief predominates. While a certain class of innocent industry is starving in its garrets, we are luxuriating in rude and cheerful plenty in our cellars and taverns. 'All honour,' says the virtuous orator, 'to the noble, struggling workman, who endures bitter poverty rather than rush into crime.' And so say I, but from a different motive. I know that the fewer persons there are in a trade, the greater will be the profits.

Many persons suppose that we detest the police, and look upon them as our bitterest enemies. On some occasions, I admit, we find them troublesome; but, generally, we consider them as wholesome checks upon the increase of unskilful thieves, who diminish the profits, without adding to the credit, of the profession. The ordinary police force is not a very highly paid, highly educated, or highly intelligent class; and any man who knows his business can easily avoid coming in contact with them. As to the detectives, those awful men in plain clothes, and curious disguises (which latter they might save themselves the trouble of putting on, as we know the wearers as well as our own fathers), they benefit us by inspiring an unbounded faith in their efficiency in the public mind, and stopping the appointment of real preventive officers. The sum they require as a reward, if successful in tracing a crime, is another element of

our security; as is also their plan of fostering the development of small thieves, until they become important criminals. They carefully tend the criminal fruit until it is rotten with ripeness, and then—if it does not escape them—they shake it gently into the lap of justice; but they never nip it in the bud. Why should we be on unfriendly terms with such weak and agreeable guardians?

When I come to consider the rules of evidence, the comforts of prisons, and the general leniency of the criminal law and its administration (and I have devoted a good deal of attention to these subjects during my retirement), I cannot believe that any one is in earnest for the suppression of our class, but that we are considered worthy of preservation as providers of wholesome excitement, employers of capital in a peculiar direction, agents for the distribution of wealth, bodies to be experimented upon by the social philanthropist, problems to exercise the ingenuity of, and provide amusement for, the legal mind, and members in that company which is conveniently styled 'necessary evils.' When I was engaged in the active duties of my profession, I was tried for the first and only time in my life, in conjunction with the whole of my family—my wife and four children—for a robbery of some magnitude. We were guilty, of course, but we had managed matters very artistically. My boys were not so old or so experienced as they are now, and when the magistrate cautioned us, at the preliminary examination, that we were not bound to say anything to criminate ourselves, the two youngest could scarcely believe what they heard, and thought in their simplicity that we had all made an impression upon his worship. I remember having the same feeling myself, when I heard the same remark addressed to my father, on the occasion of his trial many years before. The youngest lad was so overcome by this, to him unexpected exhibition of legal tenderness, that if it had not been for an additional caution from the worthy magistrate, and a sharp nudge from his mother, he would there and then have made a clean breast of the whole affair. That boy, like myself, and, I may say, all the family, is now a firm believer in the fact that the law does not want to discover the truth, but only desires to give an opportunity for a display of legal learning and ingenuity.

When we came up for our trial at the Central Criminal Court, we were again put upon our guard, and very amusing the trial must have appeared to the spectators, for it amused even me. There we

stood in the dock, a very happy family—a father, mother, daughter, and three sons—all implicated in one crime, and all warned to hold our tongues, lest we should spoil the sport of the trial. The counsel for the prosecution opened the case with a highly ingenious speech, full of eloquent denunciation, but very empty of facts ; and when he had finished, he proceeded to call witnesses in support of his charge. Several persons were examined without adding much to the previous knowledge of the case, for we had taken most elaborate precautions to shield ourselves from being proved guilty, although we could not avoid suspicion.

Once or twice, when some of the most absurd suppositions were put forward in place of better evidence, I thought we should all have burst out laughing in concert, they were so very wide of the mark. One witness at last succeeded in proving to the apparent satisfaction of the court, that, on a certain night, I was at a place which I never saw in my life ; but as this supposed fact had nothing to do with the case, it was not of much benefit to the prosecution. Maddened by his ill-success, the prosecuting counsel wished, in defiance of law, to put a question to my daughter ; but our solicitor at once objected to this, and the judge spoke up against it like a man, amidst a murmur of approbation that ran through the whole court. If they had put the question, I am afraid we should not have got off as we did, for my daughter is rather nervous, and could not have stood a cross-examination. But, we were spared the trial, and the liberty of the subject was preserved.

The case lasted a long time, and during its progress some very pretty circumstantial evidence was adduced, which fell to the ground, bit by bit, under the vigorous blows of our solicitor. When the speech for the defence came, it was necessarily short, for there was really nothing of any moment to answer.

The summing-up of the judge was pleasant and dignified, with, of course, a little dash of the severity required by the duties of his position. But I cannot think that he was dissatisfied with his day's work ; and the jury, who had been highly amused by the legal fencing displayed, and who—bless their hearts !—could not have put a question about the case to our happy family for the world, were glad to hurry over an acquittal and get to their dinners.

I know that the public press are always writing against the dangerous classes of which I am a member ; but seeing that we and our doings provide them with the most exciting staple of their news,

I cannot think that they are sincere in the desire they express to put us down.

I cannot believe that a Bankruptcy Commissioner dislikes bankrupts; that an Insolvent Commissioner dislikes insolvents; that a public hangman dislikes murderers; or that a Chancery Judge dislikes wretched suitors; and, seeing the leniency of the laws, the mode of criminal procedure, and the vast amount of employment that we thieves give to capital, I cannot believe that Judges, Juries, Public Officers, Police, Gaolers, Governors of Prisons, Gaol Chaplains, and Legal Practitioners, are at all earnest and interested in our extermination. So a long life and a merry one to all those honest gentlemen, and similarly to us.

AN OFFICIAL SCARECROW.

IF any Right Honourable Prime Minister of England were to request the favour of my attendance at the Treasury one morning, and when I was standing before him upon the Turkey carpet in the lofty room, were to say to me heartily and benevolently, with an absence in his voice and manner of all official restraint: 'Tomkins, you have, in your time, done the state some service, and hang me if you shall not have any office you like to name,' I solemnly believe that I should respond by naming the office of Examiner and Licenser of Plays. I do not covet the emoluments of the appointment—for the sum of four hundred pounds per annum, salary, and a fee upon every play, song, or entertainment intended for representation on the stage, would have few charms in my eyes—but it would be because I long to fill such a sphere of usefulness in the government of my country. What pride and joy there would be in feeling that I was the guardian and conservator of public morality, the one single barrier left to stem the tide of written impropriety and represented vice? While on every side there raged around me the violent, uncontrolled liberty and licence of literature and the press, I alone should remain calm and dignified, working in my little circle of self-elected

and time-honoured utility, checking the encroachments of a freedom that is not required for the public good, and purifying the poisoned spring of the people's amusements at the fountain-head. Could any man, with an inborn sense of the virtues of order, decency, and propriety, of the incalculable benefits arising from a careful governmental supervision of thought and action, wish for a more congenial employment? I think not.

Of course, in filling an office of this kind, much must depend upon the individual tastes and habits of the censor. What is one man's food is another man's poison. I can imagine a censor with a partiality for the spicing of oaths contained in the old style of comedy, while another censor would have as much horror of this peculiar means of excitement as a field-preacher. One censor may be rather loose in his notions of morality, may be prone to tolerate that which can scarcely be endured, may be charitably broad in his critical interpretations, mentally quoting that highly-convenient maxim which wishes evil unto him who evil thinketh. Another censor may carry fastidiousness to a pitch that is absurdly unbearable: may see an impropriety lurking in every phrase, and a double meaning conveyed in every point. It is an established law, that one censor cannot recall and recensor the work which his predecessors have censored. He may expend his fury upon the translated productions of an unscrupulous French stage, that come under the operation of his personal pruning-knife, but those performances that have gone before he has no power to touch, while the effusions of the elder dramatists stare him in the face, and mock him with what great critics are pleased to call their rude, hearty, honest, and rampant strength. When the Parisian vaudeville has gone forth from his office, without stain and without reproach, he must be painfully conscious that there are still in existence many fine Beaumonts and Fletchers, certain acting editions of Romeo, and of Othello, to say little of Congreve, and a host of that period.

But still, notwithstanding these drawbacks and annoyances, his position is an enviable one. Other functionaries who administer the routine of government, may enjoy an importance far transcending his; their pay may be greater, and they may dine more frequently at the table of their monarch; but these things are no measure of the real benefit they confer upon the country. It is not only in the capacity of moral sentinel that the licenser of plays may be regarded with envy; he has another function. To his care is

confided the safe custody of Church and State, the preservation of political dignity, and the protection of royalty from the rude attacks of unscrupulous dramatic satirists. When the vulgar burlesque writer hurls his wordy missiles with a reckless hand at the head of the devoted minister for the time being, it is the proud duty of the licenser of plays to interpose his slender shield, and turn back the shafts of ridicule intended for his master. The licenser of plays is elevated into a serene political atmosphere, high above all the paltry considerations and influences of party spirit. He stands immoveable, while administrations come and go. He knows nothing of the subtle distinctions between Whig and Radical, Tory and Conservative. To him they are all talking, working, governing men. They claim the shelter of his small, but hospitable office, and, like a large-hearted hermit of the wilderness, he accords it to them all.

There is a considerable body of men in this country who have no veneration for the old land-marks of public safety and governmental checks. They cannot see the importance of the duty exercised by an officer appointed to watch over the tone and purity of any portion of the public press. They consider that the stream of literature is best left to flow on unguided, wherever it listeth ; as, the more it flows, the more it contributes to its own purification. Some even go so far in their logical demonstrations as to declaim against the folly of setting up an arbitrary standard of morality before the general morality of the country evolves and creates that standard. Societies for the suppression of vice are looked upon as mistaken, but well-intentioned, organizations ; fighting with shadows ; occasionally contributing to a great injustice by aiding in the punishment of an individual for the sins of the mass ; removing a moral sore from a notorious part of the metropolis to another part that has not yet grown quite so notorious.

To persons holding these opinions, who butt at shams as a mad Spanish bull rushes at a picador, and who hate expediencies and compromises as a Puritan does the Evil One, the office of examiner of plays must appear to be one of the most feeble, the most ineffectual, the most unnecessary, and the most ridiculous of all the many absurd offices that custom and an indolent country have placed at the disposal of a British minister. Such men are accustomed to laugh unmercifully at the possible channels of evasion and freedom that exist to render the position of licenser of plays as empty

and powerless for all practical general good as the fluttering rags on a pole in the midst of a field of corn. The examiner of the light and varied productions of dramatic genius, the preserver of public morality, is a scarecrow. He is the phantom, the vestige of a shadow of ancient, bygone authority. He is like an old watchman of the last century, who looked a substantial representative of order and power at a moderate distance; but who it was found, upon closer inspection, could be tripped up by a child. He is like a mastiff chained firmly to a stake, who makes a hostile noise, and might do some little damage to those who ventured within the circle of his influence, but who is powerless for harm beyond those narrow limits. He is like an imposing beadle who presents an opposition to the entrance of a dirty urchin into the sacred temple, while the dirty urchin darts in between his legs. If his personal judgment or his sense of official duty lead him to prohibit the theatrical representation of a particular piece, he knows that it can be printed and circulated as a literary work, and afterwards read in public by the author or any other lecturer, without his having the slightest influence over its destiny in these two latter forms. When he has exercised the pruning-knife with more than his usual energy and care, he feels that the sentiments and opinions he has thereby expunged may be thundered from the orators' platform, or printed in hundreds or thousands of copies in any form of daily, weekly, hourly, monthly, quarterly, morning, or evening magazine or newspaper that the printing-presses of the country are eternally pouring over the land. He has no control over the improvised outpourings (vulgarly called gagging) of the inspired comic actor. The very criticisms upon the amended play will supply to millions of readers the rejected passages, flavouring them with free and disrespectful comments upon the judgment and utility of the moral dramatic sentinel of the state. To interpose the voice of authority in such a tempest of literary wrath is like holding up the frailest parasol to protect the head from a shower of red-hot lava and cinders dropping from a fiery volcano. It is useless; and the contest is one where the most honour and profit is got by retreat and resignation.

For these reasons, disliking fictions of power—authority which is no authority—and generally shams of all kinds; knowing also, in the present state of popular feeling and popular liberty, that there is no chance in this world of the licenser of plays ever being made a more solid, beneficial reality than he now is, or of his being

aided and abetted in his functions and duties by a censorship of public printing, and of public speaking; having also an inhuman taste for striking weak and tottering officials over the head, and burying such dead nonentities quickly out of the public sight, I would gladly and willingly, as I have said before, accept the appointment of examiner of plays, from the Prime Minister's hands, that I might lock up the department, and put the key in my pocket, writing outside the door those familiar words, 'Gone away: return uncertain.'

HOW TO MAKE A MADMAN.

EMANUEL MILKYWAY, for many years a punctual payer of Queen's taxes; renter of a family pew in the Church of Saint Lucre the Great; a policy-holder in the Jupiter Life Office; a depositor in the Saint Lucre Parochial Savings' Bank; a subscriber to the fund for the proper teaching of astronomy in the islands of the Pacific; honorary secretary of the Benevolent Whitewashing Association for the extermination of bugs and black beetles in the cottages of the poor; senior clerk in the old and substantial banking-house of Messrs Tic, Doloreux, and Company; paragon of respectability, essence of regularity, quintessence of propriety and careful conduct—you are taken into custody by a highly intelligent and active member of the metropolitan police force upon a charge of murder and highway robbery. You did not do it? You are utterly incapable of perpetrating such a crime? Perhaps so; but we shall see. You answer to the description of the criminal, for whose apprehension a reward of two hundred guineas is offered by the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Home Department; and two witnesses and one policeman can swear to your identity. You are so respectable? No doubt of it; but very respectable people have their moments of weakness, and their criminal impulses. It is a painful duty that I have to perform, and I am bound to caution you that what you say to me will be taken down in evidence against you.

Emanuel Milkyway, you are a safe prisoner in a close, damp, dark station-house. By giving an officer, not on duty, five shillings, you communicate to your distressed family the reason that you are not with them as usual to partake of supper. They are not allowed to see you that night, but early the next morning, through the bars of a cage at the police-court, you can hold out one finger to your poor wife, who is blinded by her tears. In a few minutes you are taken to the police-court to undergo your preliminary examination before the sitting magistrate. Certain evidence is put in; and your solicitor, who is there, can do nothing more at so short a notice than apply for leave to have you admitted to bail. This is refused, the case being too serious, and you are committed to Newgate to take your trial. In another hour you are in the criminal ward of the Old Bailey Prison, with ten days to the next session, and therefore plenty of time to prepare your defence. You can see your solicitor every day in a glass case; you can see your wife or friends for one half-hour every day through two thick rows of iron bars, at the end of a windy passage, in the presence of a turnkey; and you can make your anxious inquiries after your young family, with half-a-dozen fellow-prisoners near you shouting to their friends who stand by the side of your suffering wife. You are not confined to the prison diet, but are allowed, upon payment, the privilege, as a prisoner awaiting trial, of having your meals sent in from one particular eating-house in the old Bailey—the only eating-house authorized to serve the prisoners with the food of presumptive innocence or suspected guilt. Some of your companions who are convicted thieves of different degrees of magnitude, merely awaiting their transfer to another place, are not allowed to participate in the extra-mural fare. At night you are serenaded with the howls of the ruffian who beat out his wife's brains the other day with a mallet, and awaits hanging for the crime on the following Monday. Once a week you have to wash and sweep the yard where you and the other prisoners take your daily confined and dreary walk. This is not the Newgate of the last century, Mr Milkyway, but the Newgate of this present May, eighteen hundred and fifty-eight. You thought a man was considered innocent, and treated accordingly, until proved guilty by a jury of his countrymen. Fudge! Emanuel Milkyway, you are an unfortunate and mistaken man.

Your defence must be no niggardly one. On the night when the man was robbed and murdered, you stayed late at the banking-

house settling a difficult balance, and, to shorten the road home, you struck across the field where the crime was committed. Two common men saw you enter the field, a policeman on duty saw you come out of it. They recollect something—they imagine more; and they depose to what they recollect and what they imagine altogether, until a very ugly case is got up against you. Emanuel Milkyway, you must, at any cost, retain the great Old Bailey pleader, Mr Serjeant Lungs, or it will go hard with you on the day of trial!

Out comes the little, careful deposit from the St Lucre parochial savings' bank; away goes the little family-plate and the few jewels; and Mr Serjeant Lungs, to the great mental relief of your poor suffering family, is retained.

Mr Serjeant Lungs is convivial, is lazy, is selfish, and he professes to be doubtful of the innocence of his client. Any way, Mr Serjeant Lungs does not see in the case any splendid field for forensic display, and, while he retains the fees, he neglects to study his brief. The sessions commence at last, and several important trials come between you and your judge. Mr Serjeant Lungs is glad of an excuse to suggest a traversal, and your solicitor, knowing the magnitude of the interest at stake, is unwilling to advise an opposition to this course, although it leads to delay and expense. Ostensibly that you may have the benefit of a deliberate trial—in reality that Mr Serjeant Lungs may obtain additional time to study his brief—you are advised to allow your case to stand over until the next session; and you submit to another fortnight's mental agony and physical confinement.

At last the important day arrives; Mr Serjeant Lungs endeavours to supply the place of care with his usual felicitous force; you have no evidence to back him; the evidence on the other side is unscrupulous and unwavering; you are found guilty, sentenced to death, recommended to mercy, on account of your excellent character, and are finally transported for life.

In five years the man who really committed the crime discovers himself by confession, and the Home Office is put to the official trouble of sending out her Majesty's gracious pardon all the way to Hobart Town, in search of you—the innocent and unfortunate Mr Emanuel Milkyway. The pardon arrives—the *Pardon*, bear in mind, Mr Milkyway. You are probably working in chains, or under some little difficulties of the kind, for, of course, you cannot expect

to get on as well as the professional convicts. How should you, without the experience and information which they have to guide them? Emanuel Milkyway, you gladly receive the welcome missive, wherein and whereby you are solemnly and graciously pardoned for the grievous wrong and injustice which have been inflicted upon you for the benefit and safety of society.

Your pardon establishes your claim as an innocent man, and you are therefore entitled to none of the privileges and benefits of the guilty. When the jolly burglar has worked out his period of penal servitude, and paid his debt of punishment to offended justice, he is provided with a decent suit of clothes, and a small sum—not sufficient, it may be, to keep him honest, but enough to buy a crow-bar and a dark lantern to begin business with again. But, Emanuel Milkyway, you are a trespasser upon the happy hunting-grounds of guilt; you have a gracious pardon, or, in other words, a notice to quit; you are a mistaken culprit, a convicted impostor, an obtainer of criminal food, of criminal shelter, and of criminal clothing, under false pretences. The criminal food is consumed; the criminal shelter must be denied to you; and the criminal clothes must be taken from you. Get out—a naked savage at the antipodes. Turnkeys, and governors of penal settlements, however, after all, are men. There are no official instructions—you will bear in mind, Mr Emanuel Milkyway, that there are no official instructions as to money or clothing—but charity indicates what routine and precedent must deny. As a charity,—bear in mind, Mr Emanuel Milkyway, as a charity,—you can be provided with a coarse suit of convict clothing, and a few shillings to convey you to the coast, where you will do your best to find a ship, and work your way back before the mast of some homeward bound ship to your forgiving country.

Search for your deserted family in graveyards and workhouses; search for your forgetful friends, whose memories will fail them; search for your little store of hard-earned wealth, and find it scattered to the legal winds; search for your lost position in the social scale, and find it never—never—never.

Go to 'the department'—the turkey-carpeted rooms; the office; the section of Government that represents the society that has injured you—and ask for compensation. Your first application shall be treated with respectful condolence; your second with ill-concealed impatience; your third with open dissatisfaction and contempt;

your fourth with a curt refusal of admission from the hall-porter of 'the department.'

Take to drinking, Mr Milkyway, and become an object to be preached to by virtuous teetotallers who have never suffered temptation or grievous wrong; take to the comforting delusions of madness, Mr Milkyway, and become an inmate of a pauper lunatic asylum. While every place-man is provided with ample comfort in the shape of an annual pension or a commuted grant when the scythe of reform can no longer be prevented from cutting him down, the victim of mistaken identity on the part of the State must suffer in heart-broken silence.

The case of Mr Milkyway is not an imaginary creation of fancy, nor an individual instance of hardships occurring once in a hundred years. I have the spoken authority of Mr Waddington, backed by the tacit acquiescence of the Honourable Mr Walpole, for stating that scarcely a day passes that the Home Office does not become cognizant of some fresh case of mistaken identity similar to your own.

NEW PUPPETS FOR OLD ONES.

I HAVE now cried out pretty loudly against adulterations and shams; but then the shams and adulterations have always been in a different trade from my own. It is not without a struggle that I denounce the obsolete puppets used in my own literary craft; but it is time that their fluttering rags should be given to the winds.

First, there is the miser—a pure creation of fancy—an old and faithful puppet, who has amused the crowd for many centuries, though he is like nothing in the known world. I never saw his living model, nor any authentic account of its past existence; but a certain school of art required such a puppet, and he was dressed up to fill the vacant place. We gave him long, gray hair, sharp features, and eager eyes; we made him very thin, and we caused him to have a nervous twitching of the hands. We raised our patchwork idol in the market-place, and we laughed with pity and

scorn at the number of its worshippers. We told him to hide his money in coal-cellars and in dust-bins; told him to visit his store with extreme caution in the dead of night; and we told him to howl like a dog when he fancied that his secret was discovered. All these things he faithfully did, not wisely, but too well; and those who looked upon him thought that avarice stood before them. No one seemed to inquire why his face was so dirty, when water and comfort were so cheap; or where he got the guinea (as he never appeared to work) which he was always adding to his store. No one ever doubted his acknowledged powers of calculation, though they saw him losing interest on his capital every hour, by hiding a small fortune in a summer-house, or a sewer.

By adding a little more dirt to his face, and making a very slight alteration in his dress, we transformed him at once to a bone-picker; and no one seemed to be aware that the same puppet still moved before their eyes. Again, when we caused him to spend his money in pictures and statues, and to gloat over these things instead of the cash which had bought them, we succeeded in deceiving ourselves, and we fully believed that the miser-puppet had given place to the enlightened patron of art.

All this time the real miser has been walking about the great world, unnoticed and undepicted. Sometimes he takes the form of a small fundholder, living in an inaccessible lodging, upon a very small portion of his annual dividends. His face is not dirty; nor are his clothes ragged; for he finds it far more profitable to be decent, like his fellow-men. He is not thin, but plump; not nervous, but remarkably cool. He is a bachelor, of course, as families are expensive things; but he keeps a carefully brushed suit for evening dress, his plan being to dine very often at the expense of his friends. Five pounds invested with his tailor, some three years ago, have paid him a very respectable interest ever since. His omnibus-hire is not much; his cab-fare even less; for in wet weather he generally manages to secure a friendly lift. His amusements are selected from the national free list; and he has none of the small vices which eat into the heart of wealth. He is called a mean and shabby hunks by those who fancy they have caught a glimpse of his inner-life. His name was never seen as a subscriber to a charitable fund; but he is a benefactor to his country, for all that. His savings are poured into the great ocean of

capital, which alone gives food and employment to the labouring mass.

Such is more like the actual miser—(sometimes male, sometimes female)—than the wild, old, moping idiot, that we literary craftmen have clung to so long. If we are to claim any credit as depicters of human nature as it is, it is time that we drove out the old puppet, and welcomed in the new.

The next puppet to be sacrificed is that favourite variation of the miser—the old money-lender. We put him into a dingy office that we never saw; gave him parchments and mouldy furniture that he did not want; and we made him aged, weird, and grasping, which he never was. We caused him to affect a disregard for that business, by which he hoped to live, as if the trade of selling money was different from the trade of selling goods. We made the shopkeeper-puppet cringing and obsequious; but the money-lender puppet must be retiring and severe. We told him to say that he had no money himself, but he knew a friend in the City who had. If a wine-merchant had given such an answer to a customer, we should at once have perceived the absurdity of that. It was the old economical mistake of regarding gold as a commodity different from everything else.

We called our old money-lender puppet Sixty per Cent.; a singular name that was based upon some vague tradition of his rates for accommodation. We were told that the usury laws had been long abolished; but we scarcely understood what our informants meant. We had been accustomed for so long to connect money with old, withered puppets, who ground down the needy for their own selfish advantage, that we forgot all about the law of supply and demand, and the freedom which was open to the borrower of looking for a cheaper market.

While we have been hoisting this miserable caricature on high, the real money-lender has been plying his trade, unconscious that any banded brothers of genius have been trying to gibbet him in effigy. There is nothing very remarkable in this, when the old puppet is compared with the living model. The latter is stout, jolly, polite, a man of the world, and not a retiring, morose hermit. He is a father of a family, an affectionate son, and a most exemplary husband. He is always anxious to do business at the market-price; properly shaved, in a clean shirt with diamond studs, and generally

in a comfortable mansion. Far from being tender about asking sixty per cent., he has often demanded a hundred; and he has sometimes, on the other hand, lent money at four-and-a-half. It all resolves itself into a question of security; and the lowest rates are found to pay the best in the end. He sometimes makes a show of plate upon his dinner-table, and jewellery upon his wife and daughters at the opera, which have been left with him as substantial security for equally substantial loans. This is a weakness, not a crime; and is allowed for in the bill. Some traces of the old persecuting stigma still hang about him which have come down from the bad, dark days of the early English Jews. If he makes his mistakes—like other traders—and falls into bankruptcy, never to rise again, the old name will cling to him as he shuffles in shabby clothes along the streets, and he will be known as 'that cursed money-lender' to the end of his days.

Take him with all his virtues, and with all his faults, he is still the money-lender of the world; and the old false puppet must be again driven out, to make way for the new one, and the true.

The next puppet to be destroyed is one that we ingeniously made by mixing the miser and the money-lender. We boldly called it a Capitalist; and the imposition was never discovered beyond the narrow limits of the class so falsely and imperfectly portrayed. We made him thin and parchment-faced, exact, methodical, cold, cautious, gloomy, and curt; tyrannical to work-people and inferiors; a grinder-down of labour; a circumventer of his brother men.

We gave him no imagination, no courage, no sympathy, and, above all, no heart. We sent him crawling about the City streets, bent double with anxiety and age. We peopled exchanges and market-places with such melancholy shadows, until they became, in appearance, the abodes of the damned. We made him pace his small, dingy counting-house, waiting for an important post, like a hungry tiger in his cage. We made his life one never-ending rack, his capital a curse, his occupation a round of torment, risk, and loss. We made the line that divided him from the gambler-puppet so narrow, that a few slight touches sent him over the barrier; while a few heavier touches converted him into the forger, the felon, and the suicide!

All this time the real capitalist—an open-hearted, bold, cheerful, dashing creature—has been devouring his mid-day pastry at

a popular City bun-shop, or slapping his commercial connections on the back, in places where merchants most do congregate. He is not thin, he is not parchment-faced, he is scarcely cautious, and he is certainly not cold. Let him hear of a thoroughly new and adventurous investment, and it stirs his heart—for he has one—like a trumpet. He is in no way dependent on a bundle of flimsy letters, for the telegraph and other advanced contrivances supply him with the broad facts of intelligence; and his business is conducted on insurances and systems that secure him from much anxiety with regard to his ventures. His capital is only a curse to him when it lies idle at his banker's; and the occupation that gives it activity is at once to him a pleasure and a profit. His imagination is far too rich, far too active, far too practical, as he often finds to his cost, when the palace of enterprise he has raised with his wealth often sinks before his eyes, leaving no trace but a bleak dry desert of barren sand. Then it is that his ground-down workpeople pass gaily over to another master, without a thought of unselfish sympathy for their late unfortunate employer.

Such is the real, living, breathing capitalist that we may see any hour of the day, any day of our lives; and it is time that his puppet-caricature should be consigned to the limbo of nightmares, monstrosities, and walking lies.

The next puppet requiring decent burial is that well-known comic puppet, the fat alderman. We made him wheezy and short-breathed; we gave him small, pigs' eyes, and a stomach like a feather-bed; we made his life a perpetual succession of feasts; we told him his decision on turtle was final; and we called him by the funny names of Waddle or Gobble. He was the only puppet in the world who ever dined or thought of dining, and the only one who ever reached the weight of eighteen stone. We made his face as purple as a winter's sun seen through a fog; and we always gave him three chins, and sometimes four. We forgot, when we displayed him sleeping after a city banquet in his brougham, which he almost filled, that he was only an alderman in his public capacity, while in private he was necessarily a capitalist (and perhaps a money-lender), whom we had only just represented as excessively lean. Our audience, luckily for us, had short memories, as well as weak observation, and the contradiction passed without discovery or comment. We gave him the gout, and then he was excessively amusing, for gout is essentially a comic disease. The

more testy, the more red-faced, the more helpless we made him; the more tea-urns we made to drip boiling water upon his legs, and the more unruly boys we made to stamp upon his agonized toes, the more was our strong sense of humour relished by our patrons, and extolled by the critical beadles who guard the Temple of Fame. A few almost imperceptible touches converted him into the chairman of a vestry, or some eminent parochial representative of the people, and the old high-tory, obstructive, freedom-hating sneerers at municipal liberty, and opposers of free government, laughed loudly at our amusing power of comic characterization, and secretly blessed us for aiding their designs. Every blow that we dealt to the City, which in the old days had been the stout and unflinching champion of right against dishonesty and might, every shaft of shallow ridicule which we aimed at the parish—a copy of the City—were joy and satisfaction to their reactionary hearts.

All this time the real alderman has been walking briskly about under Bow Bells, unconscious of the load of fat with which we have invested him. He has been working officially and mercantilely his good twelve hours every day, unoppressed by the sense of drowsiness that accompanies a multitude of chins. He is more ignorant of the qualities of turtle, and less solicitous about his dinner, than many a Grub Street author of the present day, whose puppet representative, by the way, requires quite as much alteration as that of the alderman, the capitalist, the money-lender, and the miser.

We look upon ourselves as guides and instructors of the people, and we have dazzled and deceived them with a set of unnatural scarecrows. We have held up a puppet spy and a puppet Jesuit, with sneak and villain written on their faces, and while our believers have been gazing upon these deceptive pictures, the real spy and the real Jesuit have worked laughingly in the broad light of day, indebted to us for the shelter of an effective disguise.

These, with many other monsters of our hands, have gone abroad into the world, and the world still believes them to be solid gods, though they are more empty than the air. It is our duty, as their creators, to stand upon the edge of that narrow stream which divides the present from the past, and as they, one by one, attempt to cross, to smite them down, and bury them for ever from the light.

SUCKING BRITANNIA.

ONCE every year—on or about the day known as All Fools' Day—the country has to listen to its financial statement. This statement, or Budget, is made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer—an officer who comes in and goes out with ministries. This Chancellor may, or may not, be an able man; his notions of taxation may be brilliant or common-place; he may be industrious, he may be indolent; he may be full of ingenuity, bold in expedients, and sound in principles, or he may be nothing more than the mere mouth-piece of a Treasury clerk; but, for the time being, with the sanction of Parliament, he governs the national balance-sheet. Having collected estimates of the probable national expenditure, or Rule Britannia side of the account, for the twelvemonth under consideration, he goes to the other, or Suck Britannia side—amongst the sugar, gin, malt, bill-stamps, and tradesmen, to see where the money is to come from. On the Rule Britannia side of his department—in his palatial drawing-rooms—he dispenses his millions with an open hand; while, as Britannia's factor, he collects some of his pence by taxing lollipops, and seizing poor men's bedsteads.

Since the days when Chancellors of the Exchequer were invented, the country has had some eccentric and jocular financiers. The more eccentric and jocular the financier, of course the more comic were the taxes imposed. One inventive genius in the art of Sucking Britannia thought it would be a good thing to tax bachelors, and an equally good, though somewhat contradictory thing, to tax widowers. This was in 1695. When the bachelor or widower tried to escape from this tax by getting married, the clever financier had him on the hip with another impost. Marriages were taxed as well as celibacy, and even births and burials were made to contribute to the Treasury. Later financiers revived most of these imposts, adding to these taxes on deaths and christenings.

The tax upon the birth of children was revived at a time when the good citizen was exhorted to increase his family, when the expenditure was very heavy, the National Debt growing apace, and financiers began to see an excuse for a large outlay in a large and increasing population.

A great advance has been made during the last quarter of a century in the art of sucking Britannia. The amount drawn from the resources of the country is still large—some think, with good show of reason, unnecessarily large—but it is drawn with less determination to favour the few at the expense of the many. The general apathy and ignorance existing with regard to the details of national finance, is an encouragement to Exchequer Chancellors not to do their duty. Our budgets, in all probability, would be wiser and more just if general education included something about taxes and taxation. At present, with the exception of the small doses of political economy administered at the universities, it includes nothing. Knowledge about the National Debt, the Consolidated Fund, and direct and indirect taxation, may be picked up by inquiring youths, as savages pick up the knack of wearing dress-coats and riding in cabs; but this can only be done by 'self-help' and studying, not reading the newspapers. Few public teachers step forward to teach such lessons, the task not being showy and popular, but occasionally a speaker or lecturer is found who cares more for utility than popularity. Such a lecturer has appeared lately in the person of Mr Thomas Hankey, the well-known banker and Member of Parliament, who judiciously employed what little leisure he had during the parliamentary recess in delivering a descriptive lecture on taxes and expenditure.* Mr Hankey is not an avowed financial reformer, and seems inclined to support the existing state of things, but the value of his lecture will be found in its clear statement of details. How little, the lecturer considered, was known of those details, even in banking circles in the City, may be gathered from the fact that the lecture was delivered at the Bank of England Library and Literary Institute. At this dead season of Parliament we may profitably employ a few of our pages in giving the substance of this lecture, with a few remarks which may seem to us good in passing.

In former times there used to be a great state officer called a Lord High Treasurer, who often had no treasure to guard, and who

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often had to deal with payments in kind, which might be wool or any other material. This treasurer, however, has been superseded by a set of commissioners appointed by the Crown, whenever there is a change of ministers, the chief of whom is called the First Lord of the Treasury, and is generally, though not necessarily, the prime minister. The financial duties of the ministry, however, are always performed by another of the commissioners, called the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose special duty it is to see that the proceeds of Sucking Britannia are equal to the cost of Ruling Britannia. He calls for estimates, some of which, such as the amount required to be spent on the army and navy, are supposed to be considered by the cabinet, that is, by the ministers in a body, and when these estimates have been approved, their total is ascertained, and then begins the task of selecting the taxes. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer has to propose a larger expenditure than his last year's or expected forthcoming income will meet, he has then to ask Parliament to sanction an increase in some old tax, or the imposition of a new tax ; but if he can make out an excess of probable income on paper, he asks it either to reduce or abolish one or more existing imposts. When his scheme has been sanctioned by Parliament, his duties may be considered theoretically at an end. The heads of each department, such as the army or navy, ask Parliament to sanction their own estimates, and when there is no special representative of the department in the House of Commons—the House in which all money bills originate—the duty then devolves upon the Secretary of the Treasury, but not upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Secretary of the Treasury is the generally recognized authority respecting the expenditure of the country, excepting for the army and navy.

The estimates, having been already laid before Parliament for some weeks previous to their being taken into consideration, are then put to the vote in the House of Commons, and when voted, the first step, but only the first step, has been gained. No money can really be got at until an Act of Parliament has been formally passed for a transfer of money from the Exchequer Account at the Bank of England or Ireland. This Act is very properly called a Consolidated Fund or Ways and Means Act, and it directs the Comptroller of the Exchequer to obey a royal warrant granted by the Crown to the Lords of the Treasury, and to order a transfer of money from the Exchequer Account to such other accounts as

require money for those services in ruling Britannia which have been specified in the votes of the House of Commons. It is the duty of the Speaker to take care that no larger sum is granted for the use of the Treasury in this way, than the total amount of the votes which have actually been passed from time to time in Committees of Supply. Formerly, a much larger proportion of the expenditure than at present was sanctioned by previous Acts of Parliament, consequently a much smaller sum came annually under the control of Parliament. All the money received on account of the government is considered to belong to the Consolidated Fund. It is paid in as received to the Bank of England or Ireland, placed to the Exchequer Account, and cannot be touched without the sanction of an Act of Parliament, either passed at the time, or which has already been passed, and is then in full force. Towards the close of every session the financial legislation is completed by the passing of an Appropriation Bill, which appropriates every separate vote that has passed the House of Commons during the session, and completes the 'ways and means' necessary to meet these votes.

This is the extent of parliamentary control over the cost of ruling Britannia, and it is now necessary to describe the general heads of our annual national expenditure.

First and foremost in the account is the charge for interest and management of the National Debt, and this amounts, in round numbers, to about twenty-six millions sterling. Those who are inclined to make the best of a bad bargain—and amongst them we must include Mr Thomson Hankey—see in this debt of eight hundred millions a gratifying proof of the soundness of our credit, and not of the fatal facility which governments have of borrowing. Nothing is more easy than to pledge the earnings of posterity. This debt is eminently a fighting debt. It began with a sum of more than half a million at the Revolution of 1688, and increased to nearly thirteen millions during the reign of William the Third, under the title of the 'King's Debt.' At the accession of Queen Anne it was called the 'National Debt,' and it increased during her reign to thirty-six millions. George the First received it at this amount, and passed it on to George the Second as more than fifty-two millions; George the Second passed it on to George the Third as one hundred and two millions; and George the Third, owing to the American War of Independence and the French revolutionary

war, with subsidies and aids to European powers, found it one hundred and two and left it eight hundred and thirty-five millions. George the Fourth—'the finest gentleman of Europe'—passed it on to William the Fourth as seven hundred and eighty-five millions—decreased fifty millions—and William the Fourth passed it on to Queen Victoria as nearly seven hundred and eighty-eight millions. In Queen Victoria's reign, up to the close of March, 1863, the debt has been increased by a little more than twelve millions. The interest which has been paid on this debt from 1691 to 1863 (inclusive) has amounted to more than two thousand two hundred and thirty-six millions sterling. The debt is chiefly a funded or book debt, and is managed by the Bank of England—the earliest creditors of the country—at an annual charge of about two hundred and one thousand pounds.

The next item in the account is for various charges on the Consolidated Fund, of a permanent nature, amounting to one million and eight hundred and eighty-four thousand pounds. More than four hundred and five thousand pounds of this sum is apportioned for the Civil List and pensions granted by the Crown. This is a national grant, in place of all the former hereditary income of the Crown, which is divided into six classes, and any surplus from one class cannot be taken to supply a deficiency in the other. For this reason, a prudent monarch is compelled to be economical, and not to pay fancy prices for Windsor Castle Theatricals, or works of promising young artists. If we add to this sum about forty-three thousand pounds for the repairs and maintenance of the royal palaces, and one hundred and two thousand pounds which is paid to the other members of the royal family, we shall find that it requires about five hundred and fifty thousand pounds every year to support the dignity of the Crown and of the royal family.

The next item to the Civil List is one of about two hundred and seventy-four thousand pounds for annuities and pensions. This list includes kings, heroes, and ex-ministers of a certain standing, and one reverend gentleman who, as ex-Hanaper-keeper, and ex-patentee (not inventor) of bankrupts, receives eleven thousand three hundred and eighty pounds, or nearly three times as much as the son of the Duke of Wellington.

Next come salaries and allowances, more than one hundred and fifty-six thousand pounds; then diplomatic salaries and pensions, more than one hundred and seventy-one thousand pounds; and

then a charge of more than six hundred and ninety thousand pounds for courts of justice. This is made up of salaries to judges and compensations, owing to reforms in the administration of justice, and the large round sum we have given, excludes a few odd pounds and a mysterious sixpence.

A group of 'miscellaneous charges' follow, which includes Russian-Dutch Loan and Greek Loan (both war charges), Annuity to Greenwich Hospital, and sums devoted to the improvement of harbours in the Isle of Man (one-ninth of the revenue received from customs in that island), ten thousand pounds devoted to 'secret service,' which is only part of the sum annually placed at the disposal of the Crown to be used in this way, and between sixteen and seventeen thousand pounds paid to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, as Duke of Cornwall, to compensate him for loss of duties on tin.

These sums, with the interest on the National Debt, together amount to something over twenty-eight millions, and are commonly called the charges on the Consolidated Fund. They have been created by general Acts of Parliament, and are not, therefore, necessarily brought under the annual consideration of the House of Commons.

The remainder of the annual charges for ruling Britannia amounts to something over forty-one millions, and this sum is subject to the annual control of Parliament in the votes given in what is called Committee of Supply. The first two of these charges —about sixteen millions and a quarter, and nearly eleven millions and a half—are for the army and navy, the total being nearly twenty-eight millions. Ten years ago our fighting expenditure was only sixteen millions, but the Russian war raised it to a level from which it shows no symptoms of sinking. We get for this outlay about one hundred and fifty thousand effective men of all ranks in our army, and about seventy-six thousand men in our navy, with one hundred and fifty vessels of war in commission.

The next item in the account of expenditure is for Miscellaneous Civil Service, and this amounts to about eight millions. These charges are divided in the votes of the House of Commons into seven general divisions, such as public works (a bricklayers', plasterers', and gardeners' division); salaries, out of which are paid all the public officers of the thirty-six public offices, except those provided for in the Consolidated Fund, and the clerks in the War-

offices and Admiralty; law and justice, which absorb about three millions and a half; education, which absorbs nearly a million and a half; colonial charges, superannuations and retiring allowance, and miscellaneous charges. We then come to the cost of collecting the public revenue. This was formerly deducted from the income received by the revenue departments, and consequently no annual estimate was ever submitted to Parliament to show at what cost the public revenue was collected. A change, however, and a very important one, was made chiefly in 1854, since which the whole of the expenditure has been brought before Parliament, and annually voted in Committee of Supply. The total cost of the three departments—customs, inland revenue (excise), and post offices—and land revenues and superannuations—is about five millions and a half. The number of clerks and others employed by the customs is about five thousand three hundred, with an average salary of about one hundred and forty pounds; in the inland revenue, about five thousand, with an average salary of about one hundred and sixty pounds; and in the Post-office, about twenty-five thousand, with an average salary of about eighty pounds.

These sums, with a special vote of a million for fortifications, amount altogether to nearly seventy millions and a half, the cost of ruling Britannia for a twelvemonth; and we now have to examine the other side of the account, the income side—the side on which Britannia is sucked always as much as she will bear sucking.

The first great source of revenue is found in the customs duties—customs, many sound financiers think, that would be more honoured in the breach than in the observance. These duties produce about twenty-four millions—the chief sums being about six millions and a half drawn from sugar and its varieties; nearly six millions drawn from tobacco and snuff; five millions and a half drawn from tea, and nearly three millions drawn from spirits. The other heads of customs revenue are wine, corn, coffee, fruits, wood, and timber (a protective duty), pepper, and a few other articles. Our tariff about twenty years ago contained about one thousand articles which were forbidden to sail in untaxed, but now the tariff contains only fifty-one articles so taxed. Even with this great reform, however, it is far from being perfect, and those who believe that we enjoy free trade in corn will be surprised to hear that an annual million sterling is still drawn from this staple article of food.

Next come the duties collected by the inland revenue depart-

ment. These are divided into excise, stamps, land and general taxes, and income and property tax. The excise duties are levied principally on two articles, spirits and malt, the first producing nearly nine millions and a half, and the second nearly five millions and a half. The other divisions are licences, railways, stage-carriages, game certificates, hackney-carriages, and sundries. The taxes on railways and carriages are all bad, being checks upon the free circulation of goods and men.

The Stamp Duties are collected from legacies and successions (a tax upon capital and not upon income), from fire and marine insurances (a tax upon prudence), from probates of wills, deeds, bills of exchange, penny stamps on cheques, etc., producing altogether about nine millions.

The first item under the head of taxes—officially so called—is the Land-Tax, the oldest impost in England, which produces about one million. It is based on a valuation made in 1695, which no one supposes can represent the value at the present time, but any attempt to re-arrange this tax so as to produce more money would be nothing less than confiscation. The Assessed Taxes are raised on inhabited houses, male servants, carriages, horses, mules, and dogs, hair-powder, and armorial bearings. They produce about two millions every year.

Next comes the Income and Property Tax—a very direct tax—first invented or applied in England by Mr Pitt, and successively repealed and re-imposed by many Chancellors of the Exchequer. Of all the various modes of Sucking Britannia, this is the one which is the least popular, both with financiers and the public. If all the income sucked from Britannia were to be sucked in this way, Britannia would have to be ruled, as she was thirty years ago, at half the present cost. This prospect appears so awful, that the tax is not popular with tax-makers. The public dislike the impost because it is a direct stand-and-deliver tax, and prefer to be quietly bled to death by the indirect operations of Customs and Excise. The Income Tax now produces about ten millions and a half.

Next is the income derived from the Post-office. The gross produce of this department for letter carrying and banking is about three millions and eight hundred thousand pounds; and the total expenditure in carriage of mails, buildings, postage-stamps, salaries, etc. (about three millions), being deducted from this, leaves a profit of about eight hundred thousand pounds. This is a nice sum for

a Chancellor of the Exchequer to receive for the use of the country; but it can only be looked upon as a tax upon the free circulation of thought. Such a tax, no matter how collected, is bad in principle, and can hardly be good for the country. The average number of letters now passing annually through the Post-office—irrespective of newspapers and parcels by book-post (seventy-one millions, and nearly twelve millions, respectively)—is quite twenty for each person throughout the kingdom; and the sooner the Post-office profits are spent in improving the Post-office service, or in reducing the postal charges, the better for these active correspondents.

The next item is three hundred thousand pounds derived from Crown Lands—a class of property which is not very productive. The gross income from these lands is only about four hundred and thirty thousand pounds, and many quiet observers, including Mr Hankey, are puzzled by this remarkable barrenness. There is a tradition, meandering through old law-books, which is painful to all tax-payers, that these Crown Lands were once sufficient to pay all the expenses of the State, before a large number of royal prodigals took to running through the national property. William the Conqueror's income from this source, according to a reliable estimate, was equal, in our present money, to something like six or seven millions per annum, without taking into consideration the increased value of property. Now the forests—the anything but merry green woods, and part of this property—cost more than they produce, showing an annual loss of seven thousand pounds. If this was the case in Robin Hood's time, no wonder his Chancellor of the Exchequer set the practice of thieving.

The last items on our list are the miscellaneous receipts, a group that amounts to about two millions and three-quarters. Here we have small branches of the hereditary revenue (an insignificant sum): about one hundred and thirty thousand pounds paid by the Bank of England for the privilege of issuing bank-notes, or creating capital to the extent of fourteen millions; fees of public offices, a large proportion of which consists of charges on private bills (railway and public company bills), sufficient to pay all the working expenses of Parliament; a sum returned by the King of the Belgians out of his pension, seemingly to promote as much book-keeping as possible; and a receipt of seven hundred thousand pounds from the sale of old stores, which represents a loss of a million and a half, and an annual sop thrown to auction-room jobbers. These are fol-

lowed by what are called extra receipts—a large part of which is the profit on coinage—more than sufficient to pay the whole cost of the Mint. The profit is made on the silver and copper coinage, and chiefly on the latter. Gold, being the standard coin, is manufactured free of charge, to keep it steady in value. Next, in these miscellaneous receipts, comes the profit made from those useful but not very lively government publications, the Gazettes of London, Edinburgh, and Dublin; then follow the repayments from India for military charges; the colonial contribution towards the cost of our Post-office services (which we have before taken into account); the unclaimed wages and effects of deceased merchant seamen, which are paid into the Exchequer after six years; a saving on the issue of parliamentary grants, paid back in cash; ten thousand pounds received from the public as 'conscience money'—partly from people who think they have defrauded the revenue, and partly from enthusiasts who wish to pay off the National Debt; a surplus remaining unappropriated from former votes of supply; and sums derived from the Malta and Alexandria telegraph contractors, the Emperor of China, in the shape of an indemnity; and from the capture of slavers, and other sources. These sums end the miscellaneous receipts, and when the whole account is added up, we find that the result of Sucking Britannia—the total income from revenue of all kinds—is a little more than seventy millions and a half. The total amount received from taxation, exclusive of the Post-office, is about sixty-seven millions, and the cost of collection, excluding the Post-office, but including superannuations, is about two millions and a half, or three and three-quarters per cent. as they say in the City.

This simple account of Ruling and Sucking Britannia only gives the pure income and expenditure of the national balance-sheet, leaving out certain items which always appear in the official statement. These items, on both sides, generally reach another eighteen millions, and represent certain financial operations of the government. There are the balances standing to the credit of the government at the commencement of the financial year—the 1st of April, or All Fools' Day—the money borrowed from the Bank of England by the government, under parliamentary restrictions, and partly repaid during the year; the temporary advances so borrowed and wholly repaid every quarter; and the creation or redemption of additional debt. The last item may be interesting to those who

wish to watch the progress of the National Debt. The repayments of advances that are not temporary, includes an operation by which the silver and copper coin finds its way into circulation. The Mint buys copper and silver, and coins both, as before stated, at a profit, but the coin is only issued to the Bank of England, or to other parties willing to give the full nominal value for it, because they require the small coinage of silver and copper for the wants of their customers. Only those persons who require the coin for such purposes would give twenty shillings' worth of gold to receive only eighteen shillings intrinsic value in silver, or probably not above seven or eight shillings intrinsic value in copper.

One of the cleverest inventions to conceal the real pressure of taxation was the so-much-a-head theory. When financial reformers complain that the active expenditure of the country has increased sixfold during the last seventy years, they are referred to the population returns, and told that seventy millions a year, drawn from thirty millions of people, is only about two pounds five shillings a head. If taxes were paid to Chancellors by sucking babes, idiots, paupers, and a number of other similar persons, there would be some fairness in this poll-tax calculation, but the chief heads in the country who pay these seventy millions a year are heads of families. If Britannia really believes in this head theory, with how much disgust must she regard those constantly occurring cases of death from starvation which are a disgrace to the country? It would surely be better to give up a little of our great and glorious expenditure, than to support it by squeezing five and forty shillings a year from those who are dying of hunger.

MY M. P.

WE have all got our peculiar fancies for Members of Parliament, and I have got mine. Some people like a giggling member, some a flowery member, and some a jaunty member. Some like to be represented by a lord, some by an author, and some by a retired prize-fighter. Some never object to a member who sits *on* them rather than *for*

them; and others like to see their town or borough always in print, dragged about at the heels of their representative, like a tea-kettle at a dog's tail.

None of these members, I must say, exactly hit my taste—perhaps because my taste is somewhat eccentric. My Member of Parliament is not a popular member; he is not on the right road to become a minister; and he can hardly be called a popular man. He is not an Irishman, nor yet a Scotchman, nor yet an Englishman in the narrow and provincial sense. He cannot see the advantage which his country derives from Quixotic wars, nor the particularly English character of money at ten per cent., bread at a shilling the four-pound loaf, hundreds of thousands of the population declaring on the parishes, and a full 'Times' column of mercantile bankruptcies in every Wednesday's and Friday's 'Gazette.' He does not throw up his hat when intelligence arrives of the seizure and destruction of so many thousand quarters of the enemy's corn, because he knows that the inevitable result must be a considerable rise in that article of produce on the next market-day in Mark Lane. He is not surprised when he hears of European complications at a time when the diplomatic horizon looks peaceable and calm, because he knows how such a state of things may occur at any moment, while four millions of armed men, to say nothing of volunteers and ambitious officers, are prowling about the civilized countries of the world, and following fighting as a trade.

My Member of Parliament is considered, in certain quarters, to be a common, vulgar man—a man of no breeding, a man of no blood. He is admitted to be clever—decidedly clever—clever in his way, such a way as it is; but very crotchety and unreliable. Whippers-in of party-clotted Governments have never been able to make anything of him, and they have, at last, resigned the task in despair. He is said to be sulky in temper, unsociable in habits, a vegetarian and a teetotaller, because he never accepts a ministerial invitation to dine. He is accounted impracticable; he is said to be rash; he is stigmatized as factious and destructive; and he is known to be troublesome. He is so dreadfully sceptical that he believes in nothing—not even in the perfection of Government departments, although they are headed by the leading men in the State. He cannot participate in his country's joy that the right Hon. James Baggs has been invested by the Ministry of the hour with the First Lordship of the Rotten Fleet Department, because he

knows how the same rapture will be exhibited when the same able administrator is transferred, in due course, or under a political convulsion, to the Home Office, the Exchequer Chancellorship, or the Board of Trade. My Member of Parliament cannot bring himself to think that any man can have properly qualified himself for each and all of those varied departments, before he had any idea that the mantle of Burke was about to descend upon him, in the shape of a small and manageable borough, in the gift of a patron too aged to represent it himself, or holding an hereditary seat in the Upper House. My Member of Parliament has never been taken under the sheltering wing of such a venerable or noble patron; has never benefited by circulars issued from large wholesale City houses to every small tradesman who happens to possess the political birthright of a vote, and who happens to stand on the debit side of their ledgers. He has never reaped any advantage from publicans being suddenly gladdened with an increase in the billeting allowance for soldiers of more than two hundred per cent.; nor from the magisterial appointments of a county being suddenly multiplied more than ten-fold.

He has never gathered a rate, an adherent, nor a committee man, because the royal fountain of honour has been made to play for the pleasure and profit of those in office, and has obediently scattered the spray of its decorations over every dirty political outcast pushed forward to be scented and washed. The whole civil, military, naval, and miscellaneous expenditure of forty millions every year, though fruitful of support to those who conduct it, is barren to him, and it only exists as a force against which he has long contended, and will always have to contend to the end of his factious impracticable days.

My Member of Parliament has not moulded himself upon Pitt and Fox, because he does not believe in the wisdom of the first, nor in the common honesty of the second. As he does not shake the senate all the night, and shake the dice-box all the morning, or shake the treasury money-bags into his own pockets when the chance occurs, there is very little hope of his taking Mr Fox as his model, or being taken as a model by those who have been taught to worship Mr Fox.

His estimate of Mr Pitt, and that heaven-born minister's policy —especially in finance—is so peculiarly unfavourable, that my Member of Parliament must either be an 'atheist,' or what would

have been considered one in those stormy political days. How many of the mean, scurvy scoundrels, the dangerous rebels, the un-English supporters of the 'Corsican tyrant,' and the traitorous villains who reviled Mr Pitt, are now honoured and sacred in the memory of unblemished children and admirers, it would take a long, long chapter to tell. As my Member of Parliament, if he had sat under the heaven-born minister, would have been equally shunned and reviled by the virtuous, disinterested supporters of that great and infallible man, it is fair to assume that another fifty years of the future will improve his reputation, as fifty years of the past have improved the reputation of the 'atheists' and low radical wretches who went before him.

My Member of Parliament has the misfortune to be afflicted with a knowledge of figures—a dangerous gift—which has done more to render him unpopular in the 'House' than even his 'factious,' 'impracticable,' and independent votes. He cannot learn the advantage of national debts, though he has often heard them called 'flea-bites' in the course of debate; but his voice has little authority when he exposes the fallacy of such arguments, and the pressure of such burdens, because it *only* appeals to facts and principles, and not to a practical experience of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's chair. To have actually received a deputation of capitalists, who come to propose for a loan, or to have actually touched a Treasury warrant, or directed the payment of Exchequer bills, is the sole teaching supposed to furnish that necessary amount of wisdom to the oracle, which gives it a claim to the attention of the House. My Member of Parliament has a disagreeable knack—disagreeable to those in office—of kicking the financial sores of the administration, for which he is accused of obstructing the business of the day. He gives a deal of trouble to under-secretaries and political fags, for which his name is held in abhorrence, and used as a bogie to frighten junior clerks. He is not easily put off with an incomplete answer; and when he has shown an eleven years' deficit of five millions sterling in the whole Rotten Fleet Department, he is not satisfied to be shown an annual saving, on the other side, of sixty-one pounds, the result of reducing the hundred-a-year pensions of a store-keeper's foreman and an inspector of shipwrights in one of the dockyards—about thirty pounds each. When he hears of a Post-office Government contract to pay three thousand pounds a fortnight for carrying ten pounds' worth of

letters to America, by way of Galway, and bringing another ten pounds' worth of letters home, he does not scruple to tell the only possible and gifted Government that they are purchasing their political support at the dearest market-rate.

My Member of Parliament has often been asked who he is, and the reply, in the early part of his career, was not considered satisfactory. He is not a contractor looking for a job; he is not a barrister looking for a place; he is not a weak-minded man of property, ruled by a wife who is looking for a title; he is not the nominee of a landed patriarch; but simply the representative of a large, wild, untameable constituency, and nothing more. This is not the sort of member to be received without a struggle; and he is consequently closely watched, that he may be found tripping in history and the letter H. His principles, of course, are of little importance in an assembly which is governed, not by measures, but by men; and his doctrines are received with the same contempt as the preaching of the Apostle was some eighteen centuries and a half ago, when it was not looked upon as the Gospel according to St John, but the raving of a fanatical fisherman who was hopelessly mad. What makes the matter worse, his speeches are coherent, close, and finished; he is perfectly acquainted with the subject upon which he speaks; his historical allusions are without a flaw; and his aspiration and use of the talismanic letter H are worthy of a curate, or a pedantic schoolmaster. Those who are eager witnesses of his perfection in this latter trick, or accomplishment, are silently compelled to admit, that he satisfies their highest notions of all statesman-like skill, and of the whole duty of man.

MAKING A GENIUS.

IT has generally been assumed that the quality which we call Genius is one of the rarest things under the sun. Most people have agreed to consider it as something which may be born, but not made, and which cannot be ordered by the yard, the pound, or the bushel. Every man,

however, likes to believe that he possesses a grain of this precious treasure, and few men like to be told bluntly that they have no hope of this distinction. The mothers of large families, with a faith which does honour to their hearts, if not to their heads, are never tired of tracing the sparkling light of this jewel in the most leaden-eyed of their children. Fathers of families are not free from the same amiable weakness; and, sometimes, relations and friends affect to be just as trusting and discerning.

Taking the popular idea of Genius, which is the broadest we can get, and not troubling ourselves with the close definitions of keen hair-splitters, we shall find that its chief requisites may be readily taught in the schools as an ordinary part of a classical and commercial education. The usual forcing and cramming system, found at most schools, by which the dullest dog is made to take a polish which looks very well for the time, but which can never be honestly warranted to wear, is not, by any means, the system for producing Geniuses. Its fault is, that it lays out too much work for the pupil, and does not give sufficient play to idleness and extravagance. A weak respect for industry underlies all its machinery, as it was never meant to manufacture anything but showy hard-working men.

The plan upon which Geniuses, according to the popular model, can be made in any quantity to suit the demand, is so simple, that it may almost be conveyed in a few paragraphs. The marvel is, that educational reformers, inventors, or speculators, have not hit upon something of the kind before.

The chief thing necessary to do in training a common-place youth, so that he may become a popular Genius, is to deprive him of all the homely virtues he may possess. He must be taught to despise punctuality, to see the folly of keeping his word, and to regard steady reliability as only worthy of mill-horses. He must also be filled with a belief in the dash and spirit of the opposite qualities, and must be taught the propriety of doing nothing like plodding average men.

The drilling which the Genius will undergo at this new school will only give him a few rules for his guidance in after-life, and much must be left to his native impudence. If he wishes for that worldly distinction which is the daily bread of Geniuses, he will not fail to act up to his early teaching. It is impossible to tell him all that he should do, and all that he should not do; but if he really

wants to be looked upon as a wonder, he must contrive to live somewhat in the following fashion :—

At the beginning of his career he must write an epic poem with a sounding name, and get it printed. The task is not difficult; but if he objects to so much inventive labour, he had better steal, and adapt some old poem, or batch of poems, or get a journeyman writer to provide him with the necessary quantity of metre. It is not indispensable that the epic should be complete; it may be the first six 'books' out of a promised twenty, or a huge block of blank verse, which may be called 'A Fragment.'

Some years ago, in magazine writing, these 'fragments,' or literary broken victuals, were very fashionable; and they have now been so long banished from literature, that their re-appearance would be looked upon as a revival. The poem, whether it be complete or not, must deal with some lofty subject; if lofty enough to be out of sight, so much the better. It must allude very freely to the Infinite and the Vast, and must be written in dignified rambling language.

With a poem like this, well published, to work upon, the popular Genius will be fairly started in business. He will require an assistant, or confederate, in the shape of a friend who believes thoroughly, or is supposed to believe thoroughly, in his master's ability. The assistant will be much better than the confederate for this work, and a man may easily be found who will grow into a strong faith in the powers of the Genius. Hundreds of such men, with weak judgments and strong feelings, are always wandering about the world seeking for some mental idol to worship, and it will be very strange if a watchful Genius is not able to secure one of these blind admirers.

The assistant—or admirer—will be drawn towards the Genius, in the first instance, by a feeling of toadyism. He will be proud of being noticed by a great epic poet. He will tell his friends of this intimacy with a distinguished man, and will thus act as a walking advertisement for the popular Genius. To increase his own importance, he will fall into the old trap, and magnify his patron whenever he speaks of him.

'Surprising man,' he will probably say, alluding to the popular Genius; 'never eats vegetables.'

'Indeed!' says an interested listener.

'Likes them very much, but says they destroy the imagination

—particularly cabbage. Surprising man: never seems to work—and yet he *must* work; always seems to be lounging about with a Turkish pipe.'

'Indeed!' again says the interested listener, rather drowsily; 'perhaps he always *is* lounging about with a Turkish pipe.'

'Not he—not he,' returns the believing friend or advertising assistant. 'He thinks a long time before he writes—not like your hasty, superficial authors—and when he *does* give us something, it's worth having.'

So much for the believing friend, advertising assistant, confederate, or whatever we may choose to call him, who is always talking about the popular Genius in this strain. If his enthusiasm flags, or his judgment is faulty, he can always be properly set going again with a little judicious training.

The popular Genius, for his part, must begin his career with a decided antipathy to facts and figures. He must profess an utter inability to understand accounts—the relations of debtor and creditor, and the value of money. By borrowing and overdrawing, he may always take care of himself, and leave to others the trouble of keeping ledgers. His cue is to exhibit a great ignorance of the world, a great horror of all forms of business, and a great dislike of anything like reins and curb-chains. As he is the courser, the race-horse, the fiery Pegasus, who will be immediately benefited by this love of freedom, there is every inducement for him to affect this character.

The part is not difficult—it runs much more smoothly than many more honest and painstaking characters—and it will give his believing friend an opportunity for discoursing upon his large-mindedness.

The popular Genius having acquired a good sound reputation for carelessness and imprudence, must be careful that he says or does nothing likely to injure this reputation. For example, we will suppose that he has to go through the ceremony of receiving a cheque from a publisher or a patron. An ordinary man would give a receipt, pay the money into his banker's—if he had a banker—or take it home quietly, and make good use of it. This course may do for average, commonplace men, but it would be fatal to the popular Genius. Unless that eccentric but highly-gifted being excites misgivings in the mind of his publisher or his patron, as to the use he is likely to make of the money, he may rest assured that his reput-

ation is damaged. The first step he must take with the cheque, whether it is crossed or uncrossed, must be to get it changed. As he is not allowed to keep a banker (keeping a banker is another mark of prudence which would be fatal to the reputation of a popular Genius) he must go to the lowest tavern or public-house he knows, and so contrive, that when the cheque is returned to the drawer, it may be defiled with the stains of rum-and-water, tobacco, and beer. He may take home as much money as he likes out of this cheque, or he may lodge it safely in some savings' bank, but he must come out at night with seven shillings and sixpence, a short clay-pipe, a tattered coat, and a battered hat, and must be found lying in some street gutter in a helpless condition. When taken to the station-house, as a matter of course he must send round to his publisher, or his patron, to act as bail, and the melancholy state in which he was found will thus be made known in the proper quarter. The inference will be, that, like a true popular Genius, he changed the cheque at a public-house, drank one-fourth of it, was robbed of another fourth, lost the remainder, and was found with spoilt clothes, and a few shillings, worse off than ever. No explanations will be required of him—his reputation will stand in the place of them—and he will, most probably, get another cheque, this time turned into cash by a respectable clerk, who will deliver the money to him carefully at his own lodgings.

The popular Genius must not cling too much to this trick, good and productive as it is, but must vary it so as to give variety for the money. He will, of course, take credit for anything, from anybody who will give it, and seek credit from most people who are likely to trust him; and will so contrive that his affairs may come to a financial dead-lock about once in three years. He must then hear of a number of debts for the first time; of others which he thoroughly believes have been paid; and must talk loudly of bills that he has given to renew other bills without the originals having been returned to him. While he has thoroughly feathered his nest, he must seem to be in a hopeless tangle, unable to get out without the assistance of friends, and unable to go on with his great hidden work. His admirers will pity his position, while his creditors will probably arrest him and seize his goods, and, in the confusion, his great hidden poem will, of course, be lost. After being well fed in prison by his faithful admirers, he will at last go

through the Court, with the sympathy of the Commissioner, who rather likes popular Geniuses.

When he steps into the world again a free man, furnished, to all appearance, with nothing but the legal amount of 'excepted' articles, he need do nothing but sit quiet. His admirers, stimulated by his believing friend, will rally round him. A committee will be formed to aid the 'poor dreamer,' as he is patronizingly called, and every so-called practical man will be delighted to show his superiority to the popular Genius, by feeding and clothing him. One practical man will kindly tell him how to manage his affairs, while giving him a ten-pound note; another practical man will explain the law of bills of exchange, while presenting him with a piano, and a case of books; and a third practical man will tell him to be more cautious and prudent in future, while giving him a Turkey carpet and an oaken writing-table. Each patron will chuckle while doing these things, to find himself such a clear-headed, common-sense worker; and the popular Genius will sit with dignity to receive all these offerings, being really far more practical than most of his admirers.

This is the electro-plated Genius demanded by a large public—a Genius all show and no work, whose greatest effects are produced by standing still—and surely there can be little difficulty in supplying such an article. If industry is a vice in literature—as some critics, who do little, and who measure every man's powers of labour by their own, would have us suppose—we can easily grow the pleasant virtue of idleness. If a low moral tone of life, a disposition to stand still and be fed, and a self-indulgent spirit, are true signs of Genius, we may easily increase the number of our idols. While the new gods are being raised, however, the great old gods must be displaced, for none of them bear any resemblance to the popular Genius. Chaucer, with his book-keeping talent, and business promptitude; Shakspeare with his industry, thrift, and rapid production (he wrote more than two great plays a-year, besides his minor works), and Milton with his clerkly precision and reliability, must all be taken from their lofty thrones. According to the new lights, they are nothing but steady, painstaking, plodding men; the very opposite of popular Geniuses.

LITERARY MANURE.

'After the Lord Mayor's Show always comes a dung-cart.'—*Popular Saying.*

ONE great incentive to literary production is the hope of immortality. Every man who once gets his name across the title-page of a book, considers that he has secured a chance of being read by future ages. He fondly believes that posterity will have to refer to his volumes to find many things not contained in the works of contemporary writers. Periodical literature may be brilliant and fleeting; journalism, however meritorious, may and does die, almost as soon as born; art is perishable; music requires sympathetic listeners and skilled performers; but literature in the form of published books is a monument whose foundations are not easily shaken. Nothing but an irruption of Goths, an earthquake, or a national fire, can destroy the great library collected by Act of Parliament, and, therefore, Mr Pigmy knows that, as far as the British Museum is concerned, he will last as long as Lord Macaulay, or the philosopher of Chelsea.

The knowledge, however, that a printed volume always secures a place in the great Bloomsbury temple, is not enough to account for half the existing literary activity. The hope of immortality, or even lengthened popularity, reaches far beyond that one vast catalogue and those national bookshelves. It pictures the petted volume—the child of many sleepless nights—amusing the family circle, bearing the stroller company in a country walk, or lulling the impatient traveller into a forgetfulness of time. It pictures it as the friend of old age, the favourite of manhood, and the chosen monitor of youth. It pictures it circulating from house to house in quiet villages years after its happy author is laid in the dust, or worn into honourable raggedness as the most popular of books at the Mechanics' Institutes. It pictures it reprinted in many forms by enterprising publishers, now in a library shape, bound in fragrant

morocco, now in the Roxburghe style for fastidious collectors, now in the illustrated folio style for drawing-room tables, and now in the convenient pocket form—the true reward of a classic. It pictures generations of leading artists striving who shall be foremost in the work of illustrating the cherished volume, and hundreds of eager commentators quarrelling over the meaning of its faintest allusions.

This is the rosy vision—the waking dream—the flattering tale, based upon nothing, too often told by the hope of immortality. What is the reality—the dark unrelenting reality—the doom of ninety-nine hundredths of our current literature? It is painful to have to draw the curtain—to play the part of a death's-head at the feast; but some one must undertake this disagreeable task, and who so well qualified as the critics?

We are not about to allude to the trunkmaker. After a jocular existence of more than a century it is as well, perhaps, that this bogie should be treated as dead. He was doubtless a literary ogre with a voracious appetite, but his principal food was newspapers and clean broad-sheets, rather than printed volumes. He fattened upon unbound books in sheets, but seldom touched those stagnant unsaleable works which were protected by the armour of cloth and leather. The trunkmaker, as a good nursery rod, once had power to frighten bad authors and voluminous publishers; but punishments, like mustard, lose their sting, if they are used too much on one palate.

Next to the trunkmaker comes the traditional butterman, and by butterman we may be held to mean any tradesman who uses paper in his business. This devourer of bad literature still exists in full health and strength, with powers of consumption increased rather than diminished. Anything once brought within his destroying grasp may be looked upon as lost, although we have heard a few wonderful stories of literary rescues. The butterman is no respecter of quality or style, and often even shocks the feelings of his customers by his literary indifference. We once knew an old lady who took offence at this boorish method of dealing with literature, and wrote the following note to the offending butterman:—

'Mrs Blank presents her compliments to Mr Greasy, and begs that in future he will not send her the butter enveloped in portions of the Holy Scriptures.'

Devouring trunkmakers and hungry cheesemongers are bad enough, but the new doom of literature is something far more fearful to contemplate. It is alluded to in a recent article upon Mudie's library, which appeared in 'Once a Week,' where the writer, after describing the great underground charnel-house for worn-out volumes, gives us the substance of the following dialogue:—

Writer.—Wouldn't these books do for the butterman?
Mudie's Shopman.—Too dirty for that.
Writer.—Nor for old trunks?
Mudie's Shopman.—Much too greasy for that.
Writer.—What are they good for, then?
Mudie's Shopman (*with no emotion*).—For manure.

It would be difficult to imagine any fate more degrading for literature than this, for few people can look upon manure in a proper philosophical spirit. It is all very well to be told that every good citizen should help to fertilize his native land, and that the public benefactor is one who causes two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before. Authors will tell us this with an air of authority, but it would be curious to trace their change of tone when they discovered that their own volumes were to be the fertilizing agents. What effect different kinds of literature may have upon different soils we are not learned enough in such matters to say, but a friend at our elbow says that old books, taken generally, form the best of manures. We are sorry to hear it, for there would have been some little satisfaction in knowing that nothing was got by such apparent Vandalism. We only hope that a certain decency is observed, even in fertilizing the soil, and that Mr Manwaring's publications are carefully separated from Mr Murray's. We hope that no orthodox churchman has been fed upon turnips manured with the 'Essays and Reviews,' and that no sound Tory has eaten strawberries forced into premature life by Lord Macaulay's History.

If any proper division is made in laying down this literary manure, Tennyson might be devoted to flower-forcing, Dr Livingstone to exotics, and Mr Timbs to all plants that are to be raised from cuttings. It would be useless, we presume, to try to lighten heavy soils with volumes like those issued by the Parker Society, or to make light soils more solid by mixing them with popular magazine literature. Some care must be exercised when this

literary manure is applied, and a little more trouble would make such high farming perfect.

The prospect of being carted away on to the bleak cold land, when we expected to be reposing in snug libraries, is not very cheering to the literary producer. It is like a dim allegory of life and death acted before us to teach us that we are only mortal. It ought to make even the most prosperous author meek and humble, reminding him of that sad saying, so full of old Burton's philosophy, which was born in the streets:—'After the Lord Mayor's Show always comes a dung-cart.'

LITERARY FILTER-BEDS.

THERE is a compact body of tinkering philanthropists in this country whose fingers are itching to be in every man's pie. Their intentions are often so good and so plentiful, that Pandemonium never need be in want of pavement. Their theology is 'low,' their desire to proselytize is powerful, and they hunt down poor sinners with feeble tracts, and tickets for tabernacle broth. They affect to be on the most playful terms with the Holy Trinity, and address the Deity—in book-titles—with the most blasphemous familiarity.

Among other things of a hopeless, meddling nature, these righteous overmuch people have invented a Literary Filter. There is not much of novelty in its main idea; for the Romish Church has worked it for many years in the much-abused *Index*. The Evangelical party, so it seems, are not above doing as Rome does, when it answers their purpose, and the Earl of Shaftesbury, to carry out his pernicious views, is willing to take a hint from the Scarlet Traviata. A number of ornamental committee-men have been got together under the presidency of this distinguished missionary, and it is charitable to suppose that the majority of them are unaware of the impudent nonsense put forward in their name. The strings are pulled by the two or three officers who work the organization,

and it is announced that the Great Filter is engaged in sifting all modern literature into two classes. One of these is called pure, and that gives the title of the 'Pure Literature Society' to this knot of busy-bodies; and the other is called impure, by implication. When the whole of our vast current literature has been strained through this purifying sieve, it comes out—in the Society's catalogue of approved books—a shrunken pool of milky goodness, and would-be pious pap, without any sign of bone and muscle. Its purity, however, is less the result of virtue than of extreme weakness, for it has hardly strength to move on without the assistance of a patronizing society.

The operations of this Literary Filter—this inquisitorial association of angelic Paul Prys—may be classed under three heads. First, there is an agency for the collection and distribution of 'good periodicals,' that is, periodicals pronounced to be good by tasters with a confirmed palate, who start to arrive at a foregone conclusion. Secondly, there are the selection and criticism of publications; and thirdly, the granting of libraries to certain favoured institutions at half price.

The importance of the first branch of the Society's labours—the agency for the collection and distribution of good periodicals—according to its advocates, is hardly so well understood as it deserves to be.

'Whilst almost every kind of objectionable cheap serial' (they say) 'was to be had at every little shop in town or country, there was considerable difficulty in obtaining periodicals of a better stamp. The booksellers did not care to supply a shilling monthly parcel, which would perhaps contain a dozen different serials, involving considerable trouble in their collection, and producing very little profit. Under these circumstances, the committee determined to establish a central office in London, at which the various good publications of different prices might be collected, and then distributed by post or otherwise throughout the country. The value of such an agency is now increasingly acknowledged, and upwards of 120,000 periodicals are sent out annually, divided amongst some six hundred and fifty monthly parcels.'

This statement contains a falsehood, and apologizes for the 'central office'—the carrying out of the secretarial design. The booksellers who refused to supply 'a shilling monthly parcel,' or even a single penny periodical, are purely imaginary characters, invented to strengthen the hands of the Association.

Three or four booksellers may have shown a desire to pick their

custom, but hundreds more can be found who will even deliver a penny journal every week within a reasonable distance of their shops. The great distributors of this class of literature are the barbers, snuff-shop keepers, and sweetmeat-sellers in the suburbs, and these are not mentioned by the Society. An office is started, on philanthropic trading principles, and what is it able to do? With all the advantage of its overgrown committee, and that free-masonry which is supposed to animate the religious world, the society can only point to a sale of one hundred and twenty thousand 'good' periodicals in the course of the year! Why this is not one-fiftieth part of the circulation of the 'Leisure Hour,' a journal recommended by the Society, which is able to walk without a leader. The 'London Journal' has a reputation for four times this circulation, or two hundred times more than the Society can obtain for its adopted children; and the swarms of other 'bad' periodicals, if put together with their annual figures, would rather check the crowing of the Filter managers.

The list of periodicals recommended by the Society is remarkably meagre, and leads to a belief that all current literature must be desperately wicked. These are the 'Leisure Hour,' before mentioned, the 'British Workman,' 'Old Jonathan,' and the 'Youth's Magazine,' with some eighteen or twenty minor periodicals of a 'distinctly religious character,' for adults and children. The leading peculiarity of these 'distinctly religious' journals is that their contents are largely stolen from contemporary and other writers. The reader may be benefited; the Society or the publisher may grow fat, while the robbed author may starve. To sue for payment when a copyright book is bundled piecemeal into these heavenly journals, is to be worldly and flesh-potty, and to impose obstacles in the way of sectarian education.

Of the four journals first named, the 'British Workman' is a shining example of vicious goodness. When it advocates temperance, it is useful enough; but while it professes to worship the tea-pot, it has sold its soul to the demon of getting on. Week after week it is filled with accounts of 'celebrated tinkers,' 'celebrated dustmen,' 'celebrated pot-boys,' and 'celebrated sweeps.' It never touches a representative working-man, unless he is one of those rare beings who have raised themselves from a coal-shed to the wool-sack. The lives of these exceptional heroes are set forth with all the false glitter which surrounds 'self-made men.' Their

biographies are taken from popular sources without inquiry, and every anecdote that ignorant wonder or idle invention has plastered on to the original foundation is recorded as a gospel truth. The beginnings of such men are always lowered, and their endings raised, so that the distance of the rise, or self-making, is in appearance increased. The clerk becomes a shop-boy, the cook a scullion, the well-to-do man a millionnaire, and the patentee a demi-god. False heroes are mixed with the true, and drunkards and railway-jobbers, like the late Robert Stephenson, are held up as models to be copied.

The lessons taught by such writing and such illustrations of character are greasy and pernicious. They make too much of the fat paunch and the full purse. They cause thousands to be discontented with an humble position in life which can never be altered. They incite thousands to start in an exciting race, in which one man *may* win, but in which millions *must* fail. They breed a race of restless inventors with no invention, who starve themselves and their children, and neglect their allotted work to register useless patents, in the vain search for wealth. They talk to their listeners only of the score or two who succeed, and not of the common-place crowds who must stand where they are placed. Such reading may be thought 'good' by those who create it, and may be sold under the stamp and authority of a 'Pure Literature Society,' but it is doubtful whether any more unhealthy stimulus could be found for working men, or the unformed minds of young children.

'The critical work' (we are told) 'of examining books for admission to the Society's catalogue has been carried on during the past year with increased assiduity. The value of this catalogue is now very generally felt, and applications are received from all parts of the country from persons anxious to avail themselves of its aid in forming a library.'

Who these persons are we are not told; but evangelical as they undoubtedly must be, they are as willing to be led blindfold by a central committee as any adherents of the Roman Church—the scarlet abomination—were ever supposed to be. The Society professes only to admit books after a careful perusal, and in this part of their report it is that their cool impudence shows itself. 'There have been 507 volumes,' they say, 'brought under the notice of readers for approval in the past year. Of these, 25 have

been read by three persons, 289 by two, and 116 by one reader; the latter class being generally that of books which were plainly unsuitable to our purpose. The remaining 77 are still in hand.' This is the inner mechanism of the Literary Filter. Six tasters seem to do all the work of the Society, and they undertake, without a misgiving, to give a decided opinion upon all published books. This beats the easy confidence of the critical journals. The six tasters, perhaps, get quickly through their work, by looking at the author's name on the title-page. There is 'Palissy the Potter,' for example, written by Mr Henry Morley, and published by Messrs Chapman and Hall. The author is a man of sound reputation, and the publishers are without reproach; but neither of them is 'good' enough for the 'Pure Literature Society.' 'Palissy the Potter' certainly appears in the celestial list, but it is a reduced edition, stolen from Mr Morley's work, and published without a twinge by the 'Religious Tract Society.'

The catalogue of books passed through the Literary Filter shows a little broader spirit than the list of periodicals, though this is not saying much in its favour. Everywhere you may find traces of sectarian feeling, and a determination to arrive at a foregone conclusion. The periodicals recommended by the Society seem to be partly edited by the Society, to judge from the following passage in the report we have been quoting:—

> 'The journals recommended' (it says) 'are, from time to time, examined, and suggestions are occasionally offered which are invariably received in the same friendly spirit that dictated them. A kindly intercourse is thus maintained between the Society and the editors of the periodicals.'

This is a pleasant way of putting it, and the Emperor of the French might copy this part of the report, to describe his friendly intercourse with the Parisian journals.

The whole plan of the Society is one for inquisitorial meddling in everybody's business—especially the business of the poor—and for keeping everybody, especially the poor, in leading-strings. A taste for what is called sensational literature is not confined to the supporters of penny journals. The fact is, that while low literature, as it is called, has vastly improved within the last half-century, high literature has stood still, if it has not lowered its standard. Some of us are old enough to remember the time—not more than twenty years ago—when 'Lloyd's Penny Sunday Times,' a ghastly

feast, formed the sole literary food for the lower orders. Now we may have to register a 'Reynold's Miscellany,' a 'Blue Dwarf,' a 'Mormon's Daughter,' a 'Charley Wag,' and a few other like publications, which are kept alive by licentious description; but these are nothing compared to the mass of successful cheap publications, whose stories may be highly spiced, but whose 'padding' is unexceptionable. This is the literature which can afford to laugh at the Filter Beds. It pours down, like a mighty river, purifying itself in its course, while puddling societies squat upon its banks, and strain a spoonful of its contents with some such an air as Mrs Partington showed when she tried to sweep back the Atlantic.

TEACHING OUR GRANDMOTHERS.

THE homely proverb which gives a title to this paper is very old, but the spirit which gave rise to the proverb is older still. The desire to teach our elders to suck eggs is not the birth of an age, but of all time. It came in with human nature, that most ancient of conquerors, and it will probably go out only with the light of the world.

This time-honoured desire to teach everybody their business, especially in this country, shows no signs of decay. If anything, it is a little too full of life. It has cropped up in a governmental shape, and has given itself the title of Social Reform. It has cropped up in an official shape, and sits snugly in museums and departments to encourage commerce, manufactures, and the arts. It has cropped up in a philanthropic shape, and would like to board, lodge, and educate in a peculiar way nine-tenths of the whole human race.

If the governmental passion for teaching everybody their business could be fully gratified, we should have inspectors of everything at every street corner, and no man would be required to think for himself. There would be an inspector of shirts, whose duty it would be to see that all the buttons were in their places, and that

the fronts were properly starched. There would be an inspector of shaving-water, an inspector of slippers, and another inspector to see that the bed-room candle-sticks were in proper order. Barriers, with comfortable official dwelling-houses attached, would be built at the end of every street, and no person or thing would be allowed to pass these barriers without examination and an official order. Every man's pulse would be felt and tongue examined every morning by travelling doctors, before he was allowed to go to business, or to start on a journey. Every city would be turned into a huge barrack, and every man in it would be treated as a soldier on duty. The food for breakfast would be fixed by official order, and also the hour and dishes for dinner and supper. The complaint about cold mutton would be no longer a table-squabble between man and wife, but a thing to be filled in on an official form, and sent in to a particular department. Sheets of folio foolscap with a margin would be in demand at every turn of existence, for without them no protest could be officially brought before the constituted authorities. The hour for going to bed and putting out the light would be fixed as it was in the curfew days, or as it is fixed now on board ship in the docks. Producers and consumers would not be allowed to trade together on their own terms, but as it is now between cab-drivers and cab-hirers, water-sellers and water-buyers, gas-sellers and gas-buyers, the price which one should give and the other should take would be settled by an army of inspectors. The area-bell, the street-door scraper, the knocker, the chimney-pots, and the letter-box, would all be under the charge of a staff of sub-inspectors. No bread, nor wine, nor beer would be eaten or drunk before it was tested, and perhaps analyzed, by a government officer. Births, deaths, and marriages would all be regulated by a state department, and no child would be allowed to come into the world or go out of it without giving three days' clear notice to the managing secretary.

All this over-government would be carried on under a professed wish for the people's good, and there would not be wanting believers in the perfection of the system. It is astonishing how much management, how much curbing and reining, some people can bear. We need not go to a despotic state for supporters of officialism: they give a sanction to the encroachments of the few on the many in places where liberty is supposed to have made its home.

The popular mind can hardly complain that it is occasionally

taught to suck eggs, for it is just as ready to act the teacher whenever it can get a chance. Take half the letters written to newspapers, which get into print during the parliamentary recess, and they will all be found trying to teach many of us something we have already learnt. We may even pick out a large number of leaders published during the 'dull season' which strive to do the same work in a much loftier way.

There is that question about hotel charges, sometimes called the hotel nuisance, for the sake of variety, which is always raised at the stagnant period. A particular line of business is taken; its price lists are criticized, its arrangements are examined, and its conductors are called up to be lectured by amateurs. One amateur tutor settles the price which ought to be charged for food; another explains the terms upon which all kinds of wine should be served to the public; another fixes the price of bed-chambers and sitting-rooms; another lays out a plan for the management of the servants, and another turns his attention to the subject of wax-lights. Some of the tutors make no suggestions for improving the business under discussion, but only object to the manner in which they find it conducted. One man relates his experiences, then another does the same, and then a third comes forward to prove that he has been the worst treated of all. One traveller complains that he could not have peacocks' tongues in all places at the price of pickled whelks. Another orders prawns when they are out of season, in a town many hundred miles from the sea, and is surprised to find that they are a shilling a-piece. Another man expects strawberries as large as pincushions to follow him wherever he goes, at a cost much below the current charges of Covent Garden Market.

All these facts and wishes are brought before the silent hotel-keepers, who never trouble themselves to answer. Their silence is looked upon as a proof of guilt. A new universal scale of prices is accordingly drawn up for their guidance, in which everything is to be supplied at very low fixed charges, regardless of seasons and differences of position. A broad average is struck between all the taverns, inns, and hotels in the country, and they are all expected to subscribe to the same rules. It is almost needless to say that they pay no heed to these lessons and suggestions, but conduct their old business in their old way. Those who look through a file of newspaper correspondence on this subject, signed 'Viator,' 'Bonâ Fide Traveller,' or 'Mungo Park,' as the case may be, will see the

same old hotels abused in 1864, as were abused in 1851, and abused on the very same grounds. Where they have improved, the great increase of travellers has been the chief cause, enabling them to accommodate numbers at a decreased cost. The letter-writers have had nothing to do with the improvement, although they may fancy they have, for prices are not regulated by pens, ink, and paper. If any man is dissatisfied with the charges of a trading neighbour, his course is very simple. Instead of teaching his neighbour to suck the particular egg, let him act as if no such egg were in existence.

The passion for teaching everybody their business has taken an eastern direction since the American war has dammed up the flow of cotton. This is a remarkable instance of an attempt to instruct our grandmothers. Here is a country loudly exhorted to grow cotton which has been growing it for three or four thousand years. Deputations from Manchester cotton-consumers—a class who are popularly supposed to know what free-trade means—are sent out to Indian cotton-growers to stimulate production. This is on a par with the proceedings of some of those official organizations whose professed object is to encourage manufactures, commerce, and the arts. The seller is thought to be no true judge of his own interests, and is therefore lectured on this head by the buyer. The order of nature is reversed—the world is moving backwards—the blood is flowing the wrong way, the buyer is running after the seller, and not the seller after the buyer. The producer is told how he ought to grow the plant, how he ought to gather it, how he ought to clean it and prepare it for the market. The buyer tells him all this, and travels many thousands of miles to teach him. There is only one difficulty in the way of the well-meant lesson—the producer has been taught before. His ingenuity has been stimulated by the hope of gain, and his resources taxed to the utmost, almost before the new teacher was born. India had its position fixed in the cotton market more than a quarter of a century ago, and no deputations from Manchester mill-owners, temporarily forgetful of the laws of trade, are likely to advance this position one jot. The most singular part of the whole business is, that the deputation goes to the dearest market, but not to buy. It talks, but it makes no offer to ship. The cotton bales are stored up in the Indian warehouses, but the teacher has no instructions to move them. He wants cotton—at least, he believes so—but not *that* cotton. He tells the Indian how he may grow a better material—at least, he believes that he tells

him; but the pupil knows he is listening to nothing that he has not heard before. The cotton produced is the best Indian cotton; there is no real prospect of producing a better article; the best Indian cotton will not do for Manchester until the mills are completely starved out of their American supply, and so the Indian bales remain lodged as before in the Indian warehouses, and the deputation, after leaving many instructions with its grandmother, slowly withdraws.

While the consumer is thus teaching the producer his business, officialism is tenderly watching over both. Trade has always been the favourite child of government departments, a precious treasure to be watched over, dandled, coddled, and spoilt, to be always kept in leading-strings, as if it had never shown any power to run alone. The child is made to pay pretty heavily, too, for all this unnecessary nursing, for Government is not so charitable as many people suppose. It can give nothing, because it possesses nothing, and what it distributes with the right hand it must first have taken with the left.

Officialism has seldom shown itself more watchful and encroaching than in connection with what are called industrial exhibitions. After the great international display of 1851, it believed itself ordained to perform a great work. It first persuaded itself, and then it tried to persuade the public, that all our commerce, fair as it seemed to the eye, was rotten at the core. We are told that the art of designing had never fallen to such a pitch of vulgarity and coarseness; that there was no taste, properly so called, throughout the country; and that unless some great efforts were made we should lose our position in the markets of the world. The engineering skill and enterprise which had spanned broad rivers and pierced high mountains; the manufacturing energy which had given employment to millions, and had changed swampy villages, like Manchester, into huge toiling cities; the artistic feeling and consciousness which had given us such manufacturers as Wedgwood; and all the qualities which yearly provided the statistical wonders for the Board of Trade; were to perish miserably, unless officialism were allowed to take the reins. The fly on the chariot-wheel thought that the coach could only be moved by its puny force, and it warned the sleeping passengers in time. Artisans, manufacturers, merchants, and traders, however, paid little heed to the warning, and went on much as they did before officialism taught

them how to suck their eggs. If they were successful, they were rewarded with profits; if they were unsuccessful, they were punished with loss. Self-interest kept them in the way they should go, without the help and assistance of half-instructed guides.

Officialism, having thoroughly satisfied itself, however, that commerce could not walk alone, and having secured the Exhibition surplus of something like two hundred thousand pounds, prepared an elaborate scheme for a great Industrial University. It prevailed upon the government of the day to join in the scheme, and to provide an amount of money from the public purse almost equal to the Exhibition surplus. Never, perhaps, was molly-coddling proposed on such a gigantic scale, or a less scrupulous attempt made to rob a neighbour of his business. The Society of Arts was the originator of the Exhibition, the creator of the surplus, and the earliest existing society formed for teaching our grandmothers to suck their eggs. In the middle of the last century it had done all that the Manchester men of to-day are trying to do in 'stimulating production.' It had sent out commercial missionaries to the West Indies, and had scolded children for destroying acorns, and so stinting the supply of oaks. There was scarcely a branch of trade to which it had not made unpractical suggestions in carrying out its plan of encouraging commerce, manufactures, and the arts. Of course, amidst a heap of folly, it contrived to do a little good, for no institution, however false may be its basis, or weak its management, can be wholly bad. It struggled on year after year, with varying success, and was not as robust in 1849 as it was at its birth. The Exhibition of 1851 saved it from death, and so far may be said to have repaid its father; but still the Society had as much claim to the surplus as the Royal Commissioners had, though it was not in a legal position to secure its rights. To increase its annoyance, the rival body, which had retained the money, proposed to apply it in starting an opposition business, and the Society was only saved from this additional insult by a change in the plans of Government. The British Parliament refused to sanction the removal of the National Gallery of Pictures from Charing Cross to South Kensington, and so destroyed the only object which the Government had in view when they agreed to a partnership with the Exhibition Commissioners. The official union was at once dissolved after this parliamentary decision, the Government taking

the South Kensington Museum as their share of the capital, and the Commissioners taking the Kensington Gore estate as theirs. The great university scheme for teaching our trading grandmothers was given up, and the Commissioners turned their attention, like sensible men, to the improvement of their land, but not before their ridiculous pretensions had done as much harm to industrial exhibitions as the greatest enemies of those displays could desire.

Officialism is not in the habit of hiding its light under a bushel, and therefore when it has done anything which it thinks tolerably successful, its friends soon spread the news of the triumph.

As much stir is made about a petty museum, a loan of a few casts or models to a provincial school of design, or the opening of a feeble exhibition of art in the suburbs, as if officialism had discovered the Philosopher's Stone, or the Elixir of Life. We hear of these triumphs in a variety of ways, but generally through complacent official reports drawn up by believers in the divine right of coddling, and printed upon public paper at the public expense.

When trading enterprise makes its mark in the same field—which it does every day and every hour—it must not look to official pens to record its praises.

Officialism has no sympathy or connection with any other shop. It looks coldly upon any traveller going along the same road. There is a place in London which is a creation amongst Art exhibitions, and yet officialism has probably never heard of it. I allude to the Canterbury Music Hall in Lambeth Marsh. It has been worthily patted on the back by several admiring journalists, and one has called it the 'Royal Academy over the Water.' It was built in 1851, as the leader of a new school of music halls, designed to supplant the old tavern concert-rooms and the public-house 'harmonic meetings.' The building was framed with some architectural pretensions; sculpture was used as part of the decorations; the ventilating arrangements were well planned, and the comfort of the visitors was secured in every way. The music performed included many popular songs—both comic and sentimental—some of them being those classical lyrics which the world will never let die; but the chief feature of the evening was a selection from an opera, rendered by a very efficient company of singers, with a chorus and instrumental accompaniments. Under this head some of the best works of the best masters were given, night after night;

and so energetic were the conductors in getting opera-scores from France, Germany, and Italy, that the quiet, orderly working men and women who formed the chief visitors of the Canterbury Hall, heard many works of foreign musical composers long before they were brought out at the Italian Opera Houses.

After some few years of successful management in this way, the proprietors added a side-hall to their building, and this they fitted up as a gallery of modern pictures. Well lighted, well supplied with works by many of the leading Royal Academicians, and with a printed catalogue of the paintings, this gallery was a great and refining attraction to the visitors. The Exhibition, for its size, was as good as any average May display at the Royal Academy, with the additional advantage of being open at a time when working-men could go and see it. The admission charge to the hall, concert, and picture-gallery, was six-pence.

Such was the Canterbury Hall, Lambeth; and such, I am happy to say, it is now, with its glory and success undiminished. Those who know the neighbourhood in which it has sprung up—the 'gaffs' and coarse, greasy theatres of the 'New Cut'—will rejoice to see such wholesome amusement provided for the factory-workmen and their wives, who form three-fourths of the local population. The educational influence of such a place can hardly be over-rated, although it is created by mere trading enterprise, acting in an obscure corner of London. If officialism had been the father of this music-hall and picture-gallery, we should have been called upon to bow down and worship the whole scheme, including a long line of official managers with enormous salaries. Every blue or green covered official report would have alluded to the place as a great instrument for regenerating the masses. As it is, the temple of social improvement is left to announce its own attractions, and we find it, as we wish to find everything, without an official guide.

TABLE TALK.

HYLAS. Sit down, good master mine, and draw thy chair near this sea-coal fire. The air bites shrewdly on the Northern road.

PHILONOUS. True, most hospitable host; and the wind is none of the most gentle. 'Marry, child,' said the fisherman's wife, as she closed her lattice window, 'but there will be fearful work at sea to-night.' You know the quotation—Cornish melo-drama, about smugglers, Act 1st, Scene——

HYLAS. Right well; with the tea-board thunder, and the snow-storm formed of shreds of rejected and confiscated plays. But draw round; here shall no uncouth blast cause those masterpieces of dental skill to rattle, or tip that classic nose with blue.

PHIL. True, most high priest of comfort. I am not ignorant of the manifold allurements of thy snuggery. In some such room sat Cowper when he wrote that cosy epic 'The Task.'

HYLAS. Thy taste is not for the 'cup that cheers but not inebriates,' hypocrite as thou art. Fill thy beaker full of the warm south, and take the bottle off that detestable crochet mat, which Betty always pushes under my nose to remind me of my weakness.

PHIL. Is it a *gage d'amour* that thus offends the too sensitive nerves of my friend?

HYLAS. No; alas!

PHIL. Then give me an account of the acquisition of this masterpiece of needle art.

HYLAS. 'Twas at a fancy fair at Chiswick. Lounger and idler as I am, in an evil moment I lounged into this hot-bed of charitable extortion. My eye caught that of a lovely being, who with beautiful humility condescended to officiate at a counter. Some fascination bound me to the spot. I received unconsciously that worsted platter in one hand; I tendered with the other a five-pound note—the only money I had about me. I looked in vain for change. I

only received a peculiarly gracious smile, and an overpowering curtsey. I began to understand my position. I, a stern disciple of Ricardo, had been swindled into doing a benevolent action—into subscribing indirectly to the 'Fund for promoting Vaccination in Central Africa!'

PHIL. And the name of the fair swindler was ——?

HYLAS. The young Countess of Fitzwheedle.

PHIL. I cannot sympathize with you. You received full value in gazing at the beloved one. Besides, you should carry small coin with you. I have two pen-wipers at home that cost a sovereign. One represents a donation of ten shillings to the 'Ragged Schools of St Tothill-in-the-Fields,' applied, I suppose, to mending the breeches of the young alumni, which the Countess of Fitzwheedle could not do, of course, with a crochet needle, except through the medium of a 'Fancy Fair.' The other represents an equal amount applied to the removal of the Church of St Consols in the Money Market from the immediate contact of Mammon—(a contact so close, flanked as it was on both sides by banking houses, that the filthy lucre must have oozed through the party walls)—to the more congenial neighbourhood of Ultra Belgravia. Should I have ever entered into either of these vast enterprises but for a little Fitz-wheedledom? Never. It is the cheapest and most efficacious way of collecting the lounging benevolence about town. It——

HYLAS. Say no more—special pleader. Your light temperament and strangely constituted mind can, of course, see no more impropriety in removing a church through the agency of a fair, than in relieving a decayed clergyman by a benefit at Cremorne Gardens.

PHIL. An aspersion on my organ of veneration. Now, for the influence of authority in matters of opinion. You will admit that Drew—the self-constituted oracle of our club—is not a man that any one would accuse of want of respect to religion in whatever form it presents itself?

HYLAS. Granted.

PHIL. Yet has Drew often regretted to me that he missed the chance of winning the celebrated Boydell Bible at a raffle! A Bible won at a raffle!

HYLAS. A curious amalgam of incongruous ideas, certainly.

PHIL. Yes; but I have not done with you yet. You know old

Corderoy the Baptist; elder and main prop of Parrellelogram Chapel?

Hylas. Well.

Phil. He sees Ichabod written on the walls of a theatre. He would not allow his family to go to a concert if it were not an Oratorio—nor admit a pack of cards to defile his door-step. Yet this serious, and no doubt sincerely religious man, allows his children to play at a kind of Scriptural Whist, with square pieces of cardboard, each containing passages from the Old and New Testament. These are dealt out to each partner, and without ever thoroughly comprehending the game, which is intended to blend wholesome recreation with religious instruction, I have found myself leading off with Isaiah as trumps, and have become the winner of two chapters of the Psalms, and a chapter and a half of Revelations!

Hylas. Incredible!

Phil. Not at all. It is your 'serious' people that fall into these absurdities, from an incapacity of perceiving an incongruity in the relations of certain ideas, and a total want of the sense of the ludicrous. The Rev. Sydney Smith would never have introduced scriptural cards to his family, or rattled the dice-box at a Bible raffle: but speak of such a man to Messrs Drew and Corderoy, and they shrink from him as a scoffer and a latitudinarian.

Hylas. A most able defence, and the judge is bound to acquit you without any imputation upon your character. Pass the bottle. A cheerful object is a well-made, well-filled bottle. I can understand all that has been said and sung in its praise. It is the chief instrument in the art of internal and external domestic fortification. Calm and benevolent as it looks upon the table, full of joy and power, ready to give up promptly and ungrudgingly all that it possesses for the gratification of others, yet may you see it sharp-toothed, keen, savage, and grinning like a crocodile, when, broken in pieces, and arranged in that firm mortar along the outer wall, it presents a formidable barrier to the midnight invaders of the peaceful villa. Nor is it less repulsive to the young gentlemen at the adjoining academy who are longing to invade your fruitful orchard: for your wine bottle, although a jolly dog, has a true sense of the impropriety of unlawful pleasures, and opposes them accordingly. I like to watch its demure appearance as it serves out the single glass

of ginger wine at the children's dinner. It has an affinity and an understanding with the old domestic, and exerts an equal degree of respectful authority over the party. How different is its air now with us two old boon companions and men of the world, eh? Look at its cork stuck jauntily on one side like the Artful Dodger's hat!

PHIL. A very pretty prose Anacreontic; and one that would have entitled its composer to a perpetual chairmanship of the 'Jolly Nose Club,' if he had lived at the commencement of this century. But how long has Bacchus marked you for his own?

HYLAS. Ever since I became conscious of possessing some degree of intellectual strength, for I hold that it is only your man of parts who is fit to be trusted with the free use of the bottle. The great mind becomes greater under its influence, the little mind staggers under it and falls. It is like Milton's scheme of education; it requires a race of intellectual giants. But find your giants, and then!——

PHIL. Modest, truly! You are not unlike the worthy magistrate who has a stern admonition for the drunken costermonger swept from the gin-shop door, and a smile for the fuddled swell who has been dining at his club. Claret against Hodges any day.

HYLAS. And very proper magisterial conduct too. He knows that in the first case drink is the master of the man; in the second, man is the master of the drink. The lower orders of society are not yet in a fit state to be entrusted with drink any more than with universal suffrage. You must first raise them morally, intellectually, and physically in the social scale. I am not a mere theorist in these matters; I act upon my principles.

PHIL. In what way?

HYLAS. By enforcing temperance, not inculcating it. Look at the dustmen! What regulates their every movement? Beer. What is the one idea that pervades their mind—except a confused notion that everything is dust, and to dust it must return—not excepting overcoats, walking sticks, and umbrellas—I say again, beer. Their very blood must be beer, fermenting as they walk, but I do not help to supply it! A cool tankard of toast and water is always by my orders kept soaking for them in the kitchen to slake their burning thirst.

PHIL. Thou art indeed a practical philanthropist!

HYLAS. On boxing-day I have ready a collection of tracts which I distribute as appropriately as I can. To the turncock I give

'Aqua Vivarius on the Defilement of the Thames;' to the scavengers 'Cloaca Maximus on the Drainage of London;' to the 'waits' a little work called the 'Principles of Harmony;' and to the postman, who has, I understand, a large family, I apportion 'Philo Progenites on Over Population.'

PHIL. And are overwhelmed with gratitude in return?

HYLAS. On the contrary, I am looked upon as a madman—the fate of all reformers who are in advance of their age. No matter; here comes Betty with the supper.

PHIL. Strange that with all our command of the past, an impenetrable veil should be drawn between us and that unknown benefactor who first had the boldness to test the value of the oyster as human food. It is not a tempting morsel to look at, this mixture of shell and slime which I hold in my hand; but education and experience teach me that it is savoury to the palate—very savoury. Simple and easy is the act of transferring to the mouth each plump and juicy native, but what a world of prejudice and nausea must that great unknown have overcome before he could determine upon that now simple act? We have all had our ears dinned until they are deaf with the names of Columbus, Vasco de Gama, Cortes, Raleigh, Cook, Ross, Harvey, Jenner, Watt, Franklin, Brewster, Davy, Wheatstone, etc., etc., but the great gastronomic unknown is not amongst them. Rather than find the lost books of Livy, or the author of Junius, would I hear the name of that universally respected, admired, and beloved shadow.

HYLAS. How fleeting is the gratitude of a gourmand—evaporating with the morning's indigestion!

PHIL. A base insinuation; but it touches me not. Whole nights have passed with me in waking dreams of island rocks, and long sad mournful beaches, on which in solitude the Sea Pie stalked.

HYLAS. The what stalked?

PHIL. The Sea Pie is not a very poetical name, I admit, for a bird!

HYLAS. Oh, the Oyster Eater: Hœmatopus Ostralegus.

PHIL. Exactly; homely and suggestive as the name is, how welcome must the bird have been to some poor shipwrecked outcast, as stalking before him on that hopeless barren beach, it showed him with its chisel bill the way to treasures far more precious than a jewel mine. This is the first glimpse that humanity got of the invaluable art of oyster eating.

Hylas. Your natural history is sound; your inference is fanciful, and, in all probability, just. It would make a worthy addition to the Pseudodoxia Epidemica of Sir Thomas Browne, or a pretty chapter in a new work to be entitled 'Vestiges of the Natural Dishes of Creation.'

Phil. The best of all dishes. Look at this oyster, with its Doric simplicity, and its Doric strength, and compare it with that highly artificial production on the table—that composite frippery—that stratified crudity—a pork pie.

Hylas. The cherished luxury of Leicestershire thus vilified! Provocative of indigestion as that pie may seem to you, it was put together by a lovely cousin at Melton Mowbray, whose fair hands are equally skilful in rendering a sonata of Beethoven, or in compounding the gastronomic mysteries of the kitchen.

Phil. Trusting innocent: it is a painful duty to have to undeceive such confiding simplicity, but it must be done. Melton Mowbray is evidently unknown to you.

Hylas. It is.

Phil. Know then, that rural as its name may sound, it is a manufacturing town, and its staple product is the pie of which we have a specimen on the table. It possesses several factories, with a regular staff of operatives. Its population in 1850 was——

Hylas. Fudge!

Phil. I have seen the mills at work in this little alimentary Manchester. I have heard the dinner-bell sound at twelve; and have seen the well-conducted, orderly workpeople turn out to their humble mid-day repast, after working all the morning upon the raw material of pies. 'May good digestion wait on appetite,' I ejaculated, as they wound away in the distance. That pie is not a hand-made production of your fair cousin; it is a dyspeptic abortion, turned out by machinery!

Hylas. Well, let it pass, man of delicate appetite:—

'I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good,
But sure I am that I can drink
With him who wears a hood!
Both back and side go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand go cold;
But belly, God give thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old!'

I think old Bishop Still must have had you in his eye when he chanted that episcopal lay some centuries ago.

PHIL. I admit, without shame, a love for the fine old English drink. Give me a pot of good beer and the 'Religio Medici,' and the world may wag as it will.

HYLAS. Porson Redivivus!

PHIL. It is a relief to escape for a time from the din, rattle, and weak refinement of the present, into the monastic calm and vigorous coarseness of the past—to take up an old thoughtful book that has not been vulgarized by *enterprising* publishers, and hawked about the town in penny numbers!

HYLAS. Rabelais, Montaigne, and others have themselves placed a most effectual barrier against any such levelling proceeding, by a freedom of style that the 'weak refinement' of the day can hardly tolerate.

PHIL. Allah be praised! they have. Are we to have nothing *caviare* to the multitude? Is everything to be turned inside out, and exposed in the market-place?

HYLAS. We must not turn up our Conservative noses at 'progress.'

PHIL. 'Progress' is a dream! Look at the so-called 'Free Libraries.' What is their condition? Dying for want of support. A subscription so small as a penny a month cannot be extracted from the pockets of the enlightened multitude. No, my friend, the principle of 'progress,' interpreted in the popular sense, does not exist; and if it did, push it to its logical conclusion, and what would be the result? Two nightmen debating 'Berkeley's Theory of Matter,' while their offensive vehicle blocked up the thoroughfare! Let me chant you a stave on that subject called 'The Refined Drover.'

He sits with his flocks, and pipes all day
With an oaten reed and pastoral song;
He's quite relinquish'd the pipe of clay,—
For smoking, he thinks, is decidedly wrong.
He's quite left off the drinking of beer,
And taken to coffee and tea instead;
And spirits he never takes, for fear
They should, as he says, 'get into his head.'

And then he has grown so very humane,
He never now pulls a lamb by the tail;

He's quite left off—as it caused them pain—
Stirring them up with a ten-penny nail!
His gentle ways are pleasant to see:—
You never hear him companions abuse;
And 'lauk-a-daisy,' or 'deary-me,'
Is about the strongest oath that he'll use.

In coffee-houses he sips his tea,
And lingers over the Quarterly's page;
Or looks at the 'latest news,' to see
What is going on in this wonderful age.
And if he getteth a leisure day,
He'll to the Royal Academy go;
At skittles he never cares to play,
He thinks the game is decidedly low.

And then he dresses so very neat—
He looks very much like a banker's clerk;
As he drives his flock along the street,
He's often the theme of general remark:
If you saw him on a rainy day,
You'd think him a most fastidious fellow,
As through the mud he picketh his way,
Under a beautiful silk umbrella!

Hylas. Well sung; but a *reductio ad absurdum*, more satirical than just. You do not deny the existence of material progress?

Phil. A general advance in the standard of living? Certainly not; and for that very reason would I sweep away all visionary schemes for forcing knowledge upon 'the masses.' If material progress be a fact, let it work out its intellectual effects unaided, unmolested. Depend upon it that everything the most sanguine optimist may desire will follow in its train. To attempt to do more, is to adopt a hot-house expedient for raising unnatural flowers upon an uncongenial soil—showy to the eye, but wanting in root.

Hylas. We pass from grave to gay, from lively to severe; and at a time when, if our magnums of 1836 vintage had done the duty usually ascribed to them, we ought to be wallowing under the table, we find ourselves proving my theory respecting drink, by discussing one of the great social problems of the age!

Phil. A hint to conclude. The bottle is empty, and the fire has died out. Give me my life-preserver and my hat; and, until our next meeting, fare thee well!

COMMON-PLACE.

HYLAS. The more I examine our current literature, art, and criticism, the more grieved am I to find how largely they are eaten up by the dry-rot of insincerity and common-place. I wander into the exhibition of the paintings of that debateable painter, Turner, who, with delightful modesty, has left a thousand pounds to defray the cost of his own statue. I see an 'effect' upon canvas that I think I could fairly imitate by throwing a dozen eggs against that virgin, unsoiled wainscoting opposite. Not so, thinks the able critic of the public journals; it is with him 'Wonderful! worthy of Dubbin in his best days!' I go to the theatre on a great tragedy night. I hear a voice issuing from a figure draped in classic folds, declaiming with insincere elocution the words of the Poet. In the morning the able critic informs me that it was 'Wonderful! worthy of Dubbin in his best days!' I go to a theatre celebrated for its farces. I see the chief actor of the place in a new part, made to fit him like a coat or a boot. I find coarseness and buffoonery where I expected humour and a true embodiment of character. Not so, thinks the able critic; it is with him, 'Wonderful! worthy of Dubbin in his best days!' I go to a concert, where there is to be a pianoforte solo by a renowned performer. I hear, for one fleeting moment, the echo of an old familiar air, and see a clear case of assault and battery. In the morning I read that it was 'Wonderful! worthy of Dubbin in his best days!' I take up, at the reading-room, the last new novel. I find in it neither plot, character, nor style; but the able critic declares it to be 'Wonderful! worthy of Dubbin in his best days!'

PHILONOUS. Verily, my friend, thou art hard upon the modern Longinus. Thou surely wouldst not have painter, actor, musician, and novelist above the comprehension of their appointed judge, or the universal critic above the comprehension of his audience? The

author or performer in this case is worthy of his critic, the critic worthy of his patrons.

Hylas. Too true; but that does not modify the pernicious tendency of such trash. The common-place in criticism begets common-place in literature and art; and common-place in literature and art begets common-place in criticism. I would root up all such worthless weeds in the garden of literature, and afford room and nourishment for the growth of more sturdy and useful plants.

Phil. Hast thou fairly gauged, O great Reformer, the Augean stable thou art about to cleanse?

Hylas. I have; and that mouldy metaphor of the Augean stable brings before my mind a long list of common-places, that must be eradicated once and for ever. When the noble lord who is at the head of her Majesty's Government has given what the Opposition choose to consider a lame explanation of certain foreign treaties, I know that the next morning I shall be asked triumphantly by the Opposition organ, 'Is this a man fit to be intrusted with the guidance of the vessel of the State through the shoals and quicksands of continental diplomacy?' If the noble lord has not shown what the Opposition choose to consider due respect to the Liberty of the Subject, the Privileges of the House, or the Royal Prerogative, I know that the able Editor will tow the Ark of the Constitution out of dock the next morning, and I shall be asked if the noble lord is the person to be intrusted with the care of that venerable craft.

Phil. True, my friend; and these faded flowers of metaphor are not confined to any particular soil, they are spread over the whole area of journalism. The remarks of the Leader of the Opposition in the Government organ of the same morning are summed up as being, at one and the same time, the Avatar of Protection, and the Hydra-head of Faction.

Hylas. Yes; and if it were a mere party trick, one might let such things pass, upon the principle that the end justifies the means. But the virus has sunk deeper—into the very heart of our general style. A crowded, ill-ventilated law court—no great rarity, we all know, in this metropolis—is *forcibly* described by the *powerful* writer as the Black Hole of Calcutta. The ticket-of-leave man, when he is treated in the philanthropic vein, is feeling alluded to as the Pariah of Society.

Phil. All these points are the time-honoured ornaments of the literary mosaic style, a style that is like a set of dominoes, often

broken up—shuffled, and formed into fresh combinations—nothing new ever being added, nothing taken away. The fault, if any, does not lie with the man-of-all-work called by courtesy a writer; it is not his duty to originate, he has merely to select. If a statement has to be contradicted he falls naturally into, 'we have yet to learn;' if anything has occurred requiring a graphic description, it is simply and promptly disposed of with, 'This may more easily be imagined than described.' If any public character has distinguished himself in a remarkable manner, it is stated that 'the mantle of Dubbin has fallen upon him;' and if 'a great parochial question is shaking London to its foundations,' we are told 'that if St Spankus is only true to herself, she cannot—she will not fail!'

Hylas. Exactly; and if all this were put forward with less arrogance, one might feel disposed occasionally to let it pass, for it is possible to have a surfeit, even of the sublime and beautiful; but when I hear such patchwork called Thunder, the Lever of Archimedes, etc., and when I see the smirking, self-satisfied writer, shadowed through the empty transparency of his production, devolving his rounded periods, and evidently considering himself equal to Gibbon *plus* Johnson, it makes my blood boil!

Phil. A good wholesome fit of indignation does no man any harm; but a great reformer, like yourself, must be above all little infirmities of temper. It seems to me that if you have sworn to run amuck against common-place, you must attack the system from all points—in fact surround it, and, trust me, you will find the task no light one.

Hylas. I know it; but I am not daunted. If we take common-place while she is in her caustic mood, we shall find that to admit any merit in a man who happens to be of aristocratic origin, and not an inspired pot-boy, is to be accused of Flunkeyism. To be an advocate of order and method in the conduct of public business is to be stigmatized as a Red Tapist. To represent anything of City origin and City interest is to be classed at once with Dinners, Turtle Soup, and Bloated Aldermen. And when common-place is in her playful mood, she affects to regard 'Bradshaw's Guide' as a maddening complexity—a differential calculus; looks upon the policeman officially as an unknown quantity, humanly as a body magnetized by a leg of mutton; and finally, with admirable taste and humour, divides the cubic contents of the house-dog into a given bulk and number of sausages.

Phil. Yes, and it does not end here, for every fool one meets in an omnibus or at a public dinner, repeats with evident relish those painful witticisms.

Hylas. It is the number of persons who take up, repeat, and are influenced by common-places, that discourages the reformer. For example:—a respectable wholesale cheesemonger in the City of London, finding his business too extensive for his premises, resolves to pull down his warehouse, and rebuild it in the style and on the scale that are now prevalent. The contract is settled: a scaffolding is raised—a perpetual cloud of dust annoys the passer-by for two days, and at the end of that time not a brick of the old building remains standing. Now it happened that in the year of our Lord one-thousand-six-hundred-and-ninety-two there lived in London an architect (who shall be nameless), whose mission or speciality it was to design and build an immense number of Metropolitan churches, and as the City then was much more like London proper than it is now, the largest proportion of these structures, of course, fell to its share. In due season the architect died, and after the lapse of a few years, when time had begun to throw a poetical haze around the works of the man, the cognoscenti, who rule the public taste, arrived at the conclusion that England never had seen, and probably never would see, his equal! All his works from that moment—bad, good, excellent, and super-excellent—became objects of solicitude and veneration! Now, oddly enough, one of these churches—the worst by many degrees of the whole set—had been erected in a nook at the back of the cheesemonger's warehouse, as the custom was in those days; and when that vulgar receptacle of merchandise was razed to the ground, the half-buried antiquity stood full, with all its beauties exposed to the public gaze. It certainly was not an ecclesiastical building, as we understand that style of architecture in the present day, and as it was understood in the Middle Ages. It looked like a pile of porticoes taken from one of our modern squares, and mounted one upon the other, gradually decreasing in size as they reached the top. However, it was a production of *the man*, and as such it caught the eye of able editors, at a time, too, when during the parliamentary recess social subjects were at a premium, and political subjects at a discount. Leaders appeared in certain journals, in which the old general rules were followed for such a subject. A comparison was drawn between Paris and London, highly flattering to the former, highly

damaging to the latter, and winding up with this triumphant question—'Shall the only glimpse that London has obtained for centuries of one of the *lightest* and most *fanciful* productions of one of her greatest sons, be immediately shut out from her sight by the Goths and Vandals of trade? Never!' And half London echoed 'Never!' The men who wrote the articles neither cared for nor believed in their subject; if they had I could have forgiven them, for earnestness and sincerity always command respect. The multitude, who took up the cry—it was a good common-place cry enough for them—knew, felt, and cared as much about the subject as their blind guides; but as it was not too profound, and easily understood, it furnished fair average conversational material for a few weeks, during which time none dared to advance a contrary opinion. At the end of this period some equally interesting topic, similarly treated, took its place—the Vandal cheesemonger had re-built his premises, and the pyramid of porticoes was again under total eclipse for some centuries to come.

Phil. A very interesting story, from which, I suppose, you infer that a common-place subject, treated in a common-place manner, and addressed to common-place people, is the one thing needful to command success?

Hylas. I do. If I were an artist I would draw eternally dead animals of all kinds, mix them up with Royalty of all ages, fix the *locus in quo* at Windsor Castle, turning it for the time into the semblance of a poulterer's shop in Leadenhall Market, and—I should succeed.

Phil. My dear friend, you must not judge a painter by his works 'done to order.'—Lambseer is a man who has communed much with nature, and she has been kind to him.—The familiar is not always the unpoetical.

Hylas. There spoke your mysticism. However, I will not dwell upon Art. Let me go into society; what do I find there? Common-place ruling paramount. Have I been to Paris? Yes. Have I been to Baden-Baden? Yes.—There are no other known places in the world. Two young ladies sit down to the pianoforte to sing a duet, 'Two mermaids are we,' with a tira-la chorus of inordinate length. A stout florid nymph sings in a cheerful tone, 'Oh; let me never hear his name!' A nervous man timidly renders a bluff song about 'the fruits of the soil;' and a thin melancholy-looking youth turns his hair back, and intones through

his nose a comic ditty (save the mark!) about 'Lord Lovel.'—A low common-place standard of taste creates a demand for such things, and the demand produces the supply.

PHIL. I am afraid I cannot question your facts; and you are, therefore, at liberty to make your own deductions.

HYLAS. If I wish to depict foreign or provincial character, and to be generally understood, I must adhere to the strict rules of national characteristics. I must make the Frenchman light and superficial; the German heavy and profound; the Italian moody and revengeful; the Scotch cautious and penurious; the Yorkshireman keen and unscrupulous; and the Irishman warm-hearted and impulsive.

PHIL. This is nature according to the rules of art.—If we are not always satisfied with the accuracy of the portrait as compared with its original in the world of reality, we cannot say that it does not harmonize with its prototype in the world of fiction. As in some of the old comedies you only required to hear a man's name to know what his course of action would be; so in modern fiction your author gives you a shrewd idea of his plot, when in the first page he informs you that 'Rinaldo Rinaldino was the last scion of a noble Florentine family,' etc.

HYLAS. True; and more than this; a well-known phrase will give you the key-note to a man's character.—I will give you a few illustrations in a dictionary form.

'*A well-informed man.*'—This is a person who knows something of the peerage, a little geography, has read Macaulay's History of England, and can give a few original anecdotes of George IV.

'*A retired tradesman.*'—He carried on business many years as a woolstapler, and retired to Camberwell, at the age of fifty-eight, with a competency realized in trade. He tried reading at the 'Institute,' and gardening upon his land, for six months; but finding that a rural and inactive life did not suit him, he entered the service of his successor in business at a nominal salary, and died in harness, as a porter in the same establishment that had long owned him as a master.

'*The architect of his own fortune.*'—Lord Brickdust—the most able and learned Chancellor that ever graced the woolsack—was the son of a cat's-meat man at Bethnal-green. Often has he reverted, with tears in his eyes, to the time when his

mother used to send him to fetch his father from the skittle-ground, where he often found him in a state of intoxication.

'*A man of powerful intellect.*'—At the time Dr Forginn edited the 'Quidnunc' morning paper, he used to dine at the Grampus Tavern, in the Strand. I have seen him leave the room at a quarter to one in the morning—not a line of editorial matter then written—as drunk as four bottles of port can make a man; go over to his office, dip his head for several minutes in a bucket of water, sit down refreshed, and in half an hour dash off a couple of those startling leaders that only he could write, shaking the effete administration of the day to its centre; and after that light his short pipe, and walk quietly home to Uxbridge in company with his constant companion, a Newfoundland dog.

'*No one's enemy but his own.*'—He was gay without being vicious. His faults were of the head rather than the heart. He was guilty of many a foolish action, but never of a meanness. He might have married an heiress if he had become the Elder of a Chapel. As it was, although the beggar never solicited his charity in vain, he died leaving a few debts unsatisfied, and not sufficient property to defray the cost of his funeral.

Phil. A very fair catalogue of character, truly; enough to start a popular author in business. Before we conclude, I think I can add another to the list, a kind of supplement to the last, in the shape of one 'whose heart was in the right place.' He was young, impulsive, generous to a fault; as capable of committing a daring and desperate act, as he was of performing a benevolent action. I watched his short erratic career with almost a fatherly interest. He saved four people from a watery grave; but failing in rescuing the fifth, he provided for the widow and children. What might not have been augured from such a brilliant opening as this? Alas! in a moment of youthful impetuosity he attacked and rifled the York coach with some reckless companions, and was hanged at Tyburn for the crime. Kind, generous, impulsive, but rash and misguided young man! thy heart was in the right place, although thy hands were in the wrong pocket.

MR DICKENS AND HIS CRITICS.

HYLAS. There is nothing more unfair in criticism than to judge an author by the standard he has created for himself. The minor plays of Shakespeare are not only abused, but in some instances their authorship is discredited, because their strength is measured against the gigantic proportions of a 'Macbeth' or a 'Hamlet.'

PHILONOUS. One need not go to the Elizabethan writers for proofs of this injustice, when we have a case before us in the person of Mr Charles Dickens.

HYLAS. You allude to the reception of 'Little Dorrit.' Let us suppose that the author of this work had appeared for the first time, and laid this production at the feet of the critical public. How it would have stood out from everything around it. Every one would have felt that here was a new power developing. The humour, the pathos, the poetic command of language, the photographic fidelity of description, the enlarged sympathies, and the knowledge of the workings of the human heart—all these qualities would at once have been admitted, and all existing fiction literature would have been searched in vain for a parallel. While, however, the divine harmony of the 'Old Curiosity Shop' still lingers in the ear, while the incomparable pictures of that most perfect fiction are present to the eye, it is easy to declare any new effort of the old master weak and artificial in comparison; but how largely is such a declaration seasoned with ingratitude, and a forgetfulness of the fount from which the criticism is drawn!

PHIL. True. I quite agree in your estimate of the literary value of the 'Old Curiosity Shop.' To me there is a charm even in the evidences of indecision of design in the opening chapters of the work. I enter into the innermost confidence of the author. I see the vague idea grow by degrees under the inspired touch, till it is moulded at last into the perfect creation.

HYLAS. The undecided tone at the opening of this exquisite prose poem may have arisen from the writer being unconscious at

the time of the power of pathos within him. Wonderful as 'Pickwick' was—profusely luxuriant in characters all individually marked, and indicating in their speech their peculiar characteristics, a sufficient answer to those who deny the objective force of Mr Dickens's creations—still we had yet no sign of that rich mine of poetry and feeling, that command over the emotions of his readers, provoking tears and laughter at the same moment—a power that only falls to the lot of the pure humourist. It may have been that when the pen was again taken in hand, the writer contemplated a varied continuation of his first successful fiction, and this hypothesis is favoured by Mr Pickwick and several other characters being retained in the introduction. But from the moment that we enter upon the story of little Nell the writer feels the new strength within him, and the result is, in my opinion, one of the most beautiful fictions that the world has ever seen. From the time when the door of the old house closes upon little Nell and her grandfather, when they start upon that long pilgrimage hand-in-hand—a pilgrimage that ends, as millions know, in the death of the child at the old village, what a long and varied panorama passes before us, each picture perfect in itself, each character in harmonious keeping with the plaintive story.

PHIL. It may be urged that Quilp is introduced as a forced contrast to the child in a way that does not conceal the art, and that the drawing of that domestic Caliban is tinctured with exaggeration.

HYLAS. The contrast is not more forced than that between Ariel and Caliban; and with regard to the portrait of Quilp, I may quote the words of a distinguished critic, referring to Shakespeare's kindred creation: 'It is not pretended that such beings are, but if they are, they will be as he has pictured them.' Against this let us set the artistic skill with which everything that concerns Quilp is drawn, the perfect keeping of his life, his environments, and his death. With regard to the structure of the story, find me, amongst the boasted productions that preserve the unities, any one that can excite that breathless interest which we all feel in the long, painful journey of the old man and his child; and with regard to the pathos, find me an equal amongst any one of the writers of 'sentiment' whom England has delighted to honour.

PHIL. If I cannot do that, I fear that I can find you many

writers now, of no mean authority, who are trying to prove that the god of our idolatry is nothing but a brazen image.

Hylas. They attempt to pull down the idol more for political than for literary reasons. Mr Dickens, in common with all men of quick sympathies and high imagination, is totally opposed to what he considers the hard, dry, unfeeling dogmas of political economy. He looks round upon society, and he sees much injustice, much misery, much poverty, and much crime. Not believing in the great economical doctrine of 'let alone,' he cries out for more government; and knowing the present government to be bad, he cries out for better government, echoing the old cry of 'red tape,' and adding two new cries in the shape of 'Barnacles' and 'Circumlocution Office.' Now, if there is one principle thoroughly established, it is this, that everything which a Government undertakes can be better and more economically performed by individuals acting under the stimulus of private gain; and for this reason, that with individuals there is the penalty of ruin if they fail; with a Government there is no such penalty. In the first case it is the Bankruptcy Court, in the second a fresh grant.

Phil. Yes; and I do not see that any care exercised, by examination or otherwise, in the selection of public servants, will obviate this; for if you grant the power to discharge an official in any case of gross mismanagement—and examination is useless without this—you must entrust it to the care of some higher official, who will have no interest in executing so disagreeable a task; and when an occasion arises the natural indolence of man will find a hundred excuses for remitting the sentence.

Hylas. Exactly; and this brings us to the logical conclusion, that as all Government administration is necessarily bad, the true object of reformers is to endeavour to reduce rather than improve it. 'Red tape' is an old grievance, not worth the power that has been expended against it. In many cases it is synonymous with order and method; and those people who consider much government to be good, surely ought not to cut out these two qualities from the system.

Phil. Mr Dickens flies in the face of political economy, forgetting that its great masters are working to the same end as himself—the good government of society. When these writers, after a careful logical analysis of the social system, come to the conclusion that self-interest is the one guiding principle that regulates the

intercourse and transactions of men, when they check the open hand of charity by proving that it is ineffectual to cure the misery it endeavours to relieve; when they strike at the root of any sympathy between employer and employed, by laying down that commerce cannot be conducted unless the greatest amount of work be exacted for the smallest amount of pay; when they work out the theory of population, and demonstrate that the only real cure for the social evils around us is self-restraint as regards marriage, and a check upon the production of men; it is not the presumptuous insect on the leaf preaching to his fellow-worm, it is not even the one-sided theorist, who says, 'These principles are good, these principles are bad;' it is the calm philosopher dissecting the little world beneath him, and without prejudice, without passion, without poetry, without delusions—oftentimes, it may be, with a heavy heart, laying bare the innermost workings of the system.

Hylas. The duties of poetry are well defined. They are the refining of the human mind, the education of the emotive sympathies, and the spiritual alleviation of the sufferings of humanity. When poetry leaves this useful sphere of action, and attempts the re-organization of society, what is the result? An impracticable socialism. When poetry, not content with ruling over the wide domain of fiction, pushes its territory into the regions of fact and history, am I to be stigmatized as a fiction-crusher if I endeavour to beat it back? Who can measure the fanaticism, the practical misery, the heart-burnings, the disputes that have arisen, the lives that have been sacrificed, because the barriers between true and false have been broken down? For God's sake, let the purple hues of poetry be kept from the hard outline of fact; let the poet, the historian, and the statesman be kept apart.

Phil. You cannot suppose—nor can the bitterest opponents of Mr Dickens imagine—that, with all his force and originality of intellect, he is above the comprehension, if he thought proper to apply himself, of those abstract principles which are of vital importance to the welfare and good government of the country?

Hylas. The question is, not what he is capable of, but what he is. I, for my own part, think it no easy task that a mind of Mr Dickens's unequalled imaginative power should work in direct opposition to the dictates of that imagination, and throw off the accumulated sentiment of a life.

Phil. His opponents do not add to the force of their remarks

upon his political principles, when they endeavour to detract from his wonderful literary merit, by treating him as one of the herd of mere comic writers, the Jan Steen of literature, whose mission it is to make men grin and silly women cry—perhaps the most eminent buffoon of his day.

Hylas. When the turmoil of the present century, with all the virulence of its political debate, and all the petty jealousies of its literature, shall have passed away; when those who penned the stinging epigram or the caustic satire shall be weak, or dead, or dying—dying, and anxious to give worlds to cancel many a brilliant injustice which their hasty pens have put upon record, then, and not till then, shall we arrive at a calm estimate of the value of the writings of Charles Dickens. Even now I love to picture him far from the din of the critical Babel, surrounded by those delicate and beautiful creations of his fancy, that ideal family, the children of his pen. There, in the twilight of his study, I see him sitting with his arm round Nell, the favourite child. Her face seems worn and sad, but when she looks up in his eyes, it becomes suffused with heavenly light. At his feet rest little Dombey and his sister, hand-in-hand, and nestling to the father who has called them into birth. Poor Joe is there, the fungus of the streets, crouching like a dog beside the fire, grateful for food, and warmth, and shelter. I hear the clumping of a little crutch upon the stairs, and in hops Tiny Tim, the crippled child. Above them hover the shadowy forms of other children, children who on earth were poor and suffering drudges, workhouse outcasts that the world had turned adrift, but which are now on high, a blessed band of angels. And yet this man, great critics, is only a mere buffoon, and nothing more? Truly, a fit companion for that low player of the olden time, who wrote 'King Lear,' and acted at the Globe.

MR DICKENS AS A READER.

THE highest order of imaginative literature, in which the creative faculty predominates, is limited in the form and amount of appreciation which it receives by the sympathetic and imaginative capacity of its readers. No matter how sharply and carefully its outlines of character may be drawn, how deeply its impressions may be engraved upon the page, how broad and effective may be the colours that complete its filling in; it appeals to the intellect or fancy ,and not to the senses, of its audience, and every reader becomes the possessor of a reflected image which he has himself assisted to a great extent in creating.

With the dramatist, before his productions are moulded into a shape to live in the eyes and memories of his audience, and stamped as current coin, every form and colour of dress, every detail of scenery, every delicacy of by-play, every situation, every tone and gesture, has to be drawn with a minute and unwavering hand, and firmly impressed upon the mind of the actor by the author. This once done, the stage-carpenter, the scenic artist, the costumier, and the performer join together to raise a solid concrete structure upon an abstract foundation, that produces a uniform impression in its coarse, broad, palpable features, without regard to the inequalities of critical and mental power on the part of the audience. Of course the more subtle touches of nature, the half-hidden delicacies of light and shade, are only revealed to the select few, who have an affinity with the creative artist; but still enough remains for the rough and untrained mass, and every labourer who can command a sixpence may come direct from the brick-field or the coal-pit to listen to the singing Ariel floating in the sky, or to see the haggard witches dancing on the barren heath.

Not so is it with unrepresented, unillustrated literature. Immense and incalculable as is its circulation, it is circumscribed in

its influence and effects. The measure of its publication is no index of its power. Thousands take it and read it mechanically; hundreds cultivate an acquaintance with it because it is the fashion; tens of thousands read it with the scales of prejudice before their blinded eyes; while millions stand in hopeless ignorance, and let it pass untouched. The greater the value of a book as a literary production, the more will the circle of its influence usually be narrowed. The very shape, aspect, and garments of the ideal creatures who move through its pages, even when drawn by the pen of the first master of fiction in the land, will be faint and confused to the blunted perception of the general reader, unless aided by the attendant pencil of the illustrative artist. For the sharp, clear images of Mr Pickwick, with the spectacles, gaiters, and low-crowned hat—of Sam Weller, with the striped waistcoat and the artful leer—of Mr Winkle, with the sporting costume and the foolish expression—more persons are indebted to the caricaturist, than to the faultless descriptive passages of the great creative mind that called the amusing puppets into existence. Mr Leech, Mr Cruikshank, and Mr Browne are all pictorial expositors of Mr Dickens to the senses of those who are incapable of seeing vividly with the mind's eye the form and aspect of pure, unaided literary creations. So well do publishers know the advantage of illustrations, even when they address a highly-educated class of readers, that, rather than have no pictorial accessories after the fact, they were willing to let Mr Thackeray etch for his own works, although he knew and felt himself to be the worst artist that ever appealed to a cultivated public.

This pictorial illustration answers to the dressing and scenic appliances of the stage, appealing only to one sense, the sense of sight; but there is another mode of illustration, appealing to the ear, enjoyed by the drama, but denied to literature—elocutionary illustration. In the dramatic work, every shade of expression, every step in the gradual development of character, every happy point of language, finds a universally understood mouthpiece in the person of the author-prompted and intelligent actor. While thousands are simultaneously made acquainted with literary beauties in the acted drama, which they would never have discovered without the assistance of a trained or inspired guide, the unacted drama—the great literature of our country—is lying worm-eaten upon dusty shelves, is passed imperfectly in conversation from mouth to

mouth and ear to ear, or is haltingly read by men whose intellect, imagination, and sympathy are sick, and lame, and blind. The circle of really appreciative, unaided readers, who are blessed with calm judgment, clear perception, and pure literary enthusiasm, free from personal jealousy and sectarian prejudice, is smaller, much smaller, than those men care to admit who wish well to literature, and who follow it with a conscience and an inspiration.

Some feeling of this may have prompted Mr Dickens to become the elocutionary illustrator of his own works; and if not, it may be well that he should adopt it, until what was, and is still perhaps, a mere experiment, shall assume the settled form and character of a determined and required mission. The popularity of Mr Dickens, immense, world-wide, and well-earned as it is, is little guide to the literary appreciation of his worshippers. They are nothing when they become critical. Pickwick—a reflected picture of the cockney-sportsman literature of thirty years ago—touched as it is by the hand of genius, and full to overflowing with the rough, unshapen riches of a young, great, and original literary creator, is still clung to as an enduring monument of Mr Dickens's power; while those two unequalled twin fictions upon one stem, 'The Old Curiosity Shop' and 'Barnaby Rudge,' are passed by in silence, if not forgotten. While such generally imperfect estimates exist of the relative value of Mr Dickens's creations, it is fair to assume that half the delicacies of composition, the touches of nature, the tone and importance of minor characters, and all those innumerable graces of the highest literary art which are half hidden from the vulgar and uninquiring gaze (because they do not lie in hard, coarse lumps upon the surface), must be, to the untrained masses, as a secret mine of wealth, until thrown open by the labours of a discerning eye and a discriminating judgment. Many men there may be who are capable of doing this, but none so well qualified as the author himself, especially when, as in the case of Mr Dickens, he is endowed with the physical capabilities and the dramatic talent to give a vitality to his own mental conceptions.

Mr Dickens's readings, or illustrations, as we prefer to call them, are running, critical commentaries upon his own works. With all the self-possession, the flexibility of voice, and the facial expression of a trained actor, it is not surprising that Mr Dickens should be able to cause his own creations to live and move before our eyes. Possessing all the bodily requirements, the conception of

character alone is wanted; and there is abundant evidence of the existence of this in the creative fertility of his books. No original dramatic author, no writer of dramatic fiction in the form of novels, whose characters impress their forms upon the page in their own language out of their own mouths, can fail to be in heart, mind, and soul a natural mimic, or actor. Every character in Mr Dickens's novels, drawn in the first instance from observation, must have been dramatically embodied—acted over, so to speak, a hundred times in the process of development and transference to the written page; and the qualities of voice, nerve, and presence being granted, Mr Dickens merely passes over that ground, in the face of a large and attentive audience, which he has often passed over before in the undisturbed privacy of his study. Where the pure actor's art is shown, as distinguished from the dramatic quality inherent in all character-creators, is in certain small alterations of the text of his printed book, so minute as to escape the eye of any but a critical observer, but purposely made to produce effective points. It will be sufficient to name one instance in the 'Christmas Carol,' where the text seems to be improved in a literary sense by the elision of several words coming after, and destroying, to some extent, the effect of a well-known passage. In the glorious account of the Fezziwig ball, in the printed book Mr Dickens winds up the description of Mr Fezziwig's dancing by saying he 'cut—cut so deftly, that he appeared to wink with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger.' In Mr Dickens's vocal embodiment, he leaves out all the words that come after 'legs,' saying, with a spasmodic shake of the head and a twist of the paper knife, 'He cut—cut so deftly, that he appeared to —wink with his legs.'

It is not only in small verbal alterations that the critical effect of Mr Dickens's elocution is shown. Half-neglected corners of his works, rich in humour and character, are lighted up with all an author's enthusiasm, speaking through an actor's talent; and groups of perfect, well-defined beings are revealed, like insects in a microscope, to the wandering gaze of hundreds, who before this were probably scarcely aware of their existence. The 'Christmas Carol' is rich in having two such groups. There are the merchants upon 'Change, who discourse upon Scrooge's death, all of whom stand forth clearly under Mr Dickens's dramatic treatment, and especially the great fat man with a monstrous chin, whose in-

dividuality is as strongly, as humorously, and as forcibly marked in half a dozen lines, as that of Scrooge himself throughout the volume. Then comes the perfectly Shaksperian scene in the rascally rag shop, with old Joe, a very Verges of infamy, the charwoman, the undertaker's man, and the laundress, Mrs Dilber—all higgling over the wretched rags of the dead Scrooge. Repulsive as the picture is, there is hardly a word that can be spared; and the old huckster, with the two women, stand boldly in the eyes of the audience, until their master chooses to dismiss them. As an example of the objective force of the writing, and the power of embodiment on the part of the reader, this scene ranks second to none in the book—not even the well-known sketch of the Cratchit dinner, in which Mr Dickens conveys the geniality of the situation in a degree it would be impossible to attain without an appeal to the senses. Admirable and glowing as every word of the description is, it reads almost tame after witnessing the new life which Mr Dickens is enabled to breathe into it. Language is a wonderful and a powerful instrument in the hands of a master; but it always leaves something unconveyed of the brightest conceptions of the highest inventive genius, and this something Mr Dickens is enabled to add through the medium of his talent as an elocutionary illustrator.

The 'Christmas Carol' presents little opportunity for a sustained impersonation. When Mr Dickens throws himself into Bob Cratchit, leaning over the elbow-rest upon the reading-table, with a meek, subdued voice, and a mild timid expression of countenance, he gives an instantaneous impression of the poor, feeble, struggling clerk, which lights up the whole history of his past life. But this is merely an indication of dramatic power not allowed to develope, for Bob Cratchit is swept away by the progress of the story, and the stream of level narrative and eloquent description rolls solemnly on. The glimpses of Scrooge's early life—the fine imaginative picture of the first of the three Spirits—the account of Marley's ghost, with that exquisite touch of humour where the two back buttons of his coat are said to have been seen through his transparent body (both sketches equal to anything in the 'Arabian Nights')—the flirtations of Topper and the niece—are all read, described, or embodied in a highly impressive, finished, and humorous manner.

The contrast between the Scrooge of the earlier part of the book and the Scrooge of the latter part is drawn with a fine discriminat-

ing eye for change of character in the same individual; and every word in the conversation with the boy out of the window respecting the purchase of the goose, is watched for and listened to by the audiences like celebrated passages from a great standard play.

In 'The Chimes,' the group, consisting of Alderman Cute, Filer, and the red-faced man, is as suggestive as anything in the Carol, although of a purely satirical character. Mr Dickens's personification of these three men is perfect in the rapid gradations of voice, and is quietly enjoyed, as all satirical embodiments generally are, instead of being coarsely applauded. Mr Dickens is hard upon the political economists whenever he gets a chance; but his keen shafts of ridicule only hit the hollow pretenders to the science, leaving its great axioms untouched. It is the old quarrel between the imaginative and the logical faculty. There are more great social mistakes made by the heart than by the head; and Mr Dickens will one day shake hands with Mr Malthus, and find to his astonishment they have been both working for the same end.

The wheezy porter of Sir Joseph Bowley is a platform creation of the highest dramatic order, built up out of a few lines in the book, which an ordinary reader would pass by. The chandler's shop-woman with the wonderful name, the off-hand medical attendant, Richard drunk and Richard sober, Lady Bowley, the clerk, and the solemn humbug, Sir Joseph Bowley, are all brought prominently forward; and the lines that divide them, when they appear in groups, are marked with an ease and precision that Mr Dickens will not improve if he reads or illustrates for twenty years. The two girls—Lilian and Trotty Veck's daughter—are very beautifully and delicately conveyed to the audience; but the two greatest impersonations are Will Fern and the old ticket-porter himself. The contrast is very strong between these two characters; but this only serves to show alike the genius of the creator and the talent of the illustrator.

The tall, gaunt, fierce, hungry, magistrate-hunted labourer, Will Fern, stands in the flesh before the audience, and is one of the most powerfully-drawn and impressive portraits in the whole range of Mr Dickens's present readings. The country voice is a country voice, not too highly coloured, but forcible and natural; and the whole embodiment can hardly fail to impress upon a reflecting audience a painful social lesson, which they will not easily forget.

Trotty Veck is made manifest through a voice modified from Bob Cratchit's; and, as in the case of the meek, over-worked, ill-paid clerk, the idea of physical and mental weakness is very clearly conveyed. The trot home with Will Fern's half-starved child-niece, Lilian, and the plaintive chant of 'Here we are and here we go,' produce more tears and laughter combined than anything within the whole range of the acted drama.

The story of Little Dombey, selected from the novel, is poetical, humorous, and pathetic, affording scope for two sustained impersonations, Toots and the Child. Little Dombey's voice, and his gradual fading away, are very beautifully rendered, and are fair examples of the more refined and delicate imagination of their writer. Toots is a thorough dramatic creation upon the platform, both in voice, face, and gesture. Utter vacuity is required, and it is admirably conveyed by facial expression, while the deep voice coming from the half-open mouth is one of the most original and amusing effects produced by Mr Dickens. Dr Blimber, Mr Feeder, Miss Blimber, Miss Chick, the Doctors, Mr Dombey, and Mrs Pipchin, are all clearly and carefully portrayed; while the last belongs to a class of women whose peculiarities Mr Dickens is especially happy in depicting. The miscellaneous reading presents many features not possessed by the complete stories: the chief being that two characters—Boots at the Holly Tree Inn, and Mrs Gamp—rest for a longer time in the eye of the audience, testing Mr Dickens's power as an actor of sustained parts: while the selections from 'Martin Chuzzlewit' crowd so many performers in a small space, that the polyphonic ability of the reader is severely tried. Mr Dickens comes out of the trial with much honour and perfect success. The soldier's story opens the reading, and it is an example of a level natural tale, well told, without any straining after effect. It serves as a contrast to the story which immediately follows it, told by Boots at the Holly Tree Inn.

This story is not a story in the strict sense of the term, but a very beautiful idea, delightfully worked out through the medium of one of the most humorous and natural pieces of low, groom-like, stable-like characterization that ever came from Mr Dickens's pen. It was published in one of the Christmas numbers of 'Household Words'—a journal in which lie many fugitive pieces which show no falling off of power in the author of the 'Old Curiosity Shop.' Boots at the Holly Tree Inn, as an example of low comedy drawn

from nature, is worth a hundred fancy eccentric portraits like Sam Weller, whose character is largely marked by the vices of a bygone literature, which happily is now utterly buried and forgotten. Mr Dickens's embodiment of Boots is remarkable for ease, finish, and a thorough relish for the character. The swaying to and fro of the body, the half-closing of the eye, and the action of the head, when any point in the narrative is supposed to require particular emphasis to make it clear, and the voice sounding as if affected by the chewing of a straw—all assist to make a perfect example of pure comedy acting. It was a very happy notion to place such a pretty story in the mouth of such a man; and the audience, while they watch with interest the progress of the fanciful episode in the life of the little runaway children, are amused by the broad humour and strong individuality of the simulated narrator. The boy-child, when he gets an opportunity of speaking in his own character, is very clearly conveyed to the audience by Mr Dickens.

The selections from 'Martin Chuzzlewit,' in which the immortal Mrs Gamp is a central but not an all-important figure, present a very wide range of personation for Mr Dickens. There is the pompous Pecksniff, who does not come out very clearly; Mr Mould, very oily, full of small talk and common-places, with a keen eye to business, who is most admirably portrayed; the old half-phantom clerk, a fine representation; and Jonas Chuzzlewit, with the agonized, restless face, gnawing his finger-nails, a perfect example of elevated acting. Betsy Prig, with the masculine voice, is not pleasing. She may convey the author's idea of her; but she is comparatively ineffective as a platform portrait. The minor characters come out well as they revolve at different distances round Mrs Sarah Gamp, who is a dramatic creation of the highest order. There is no fault to find with Mr Dickens's embodiment of the immortal nurse, for no amount of study could improve it; and if it fails to produce an impression upon the audience commensurate with its artistic merits, it is because the character, coarse in itself, is so broadly and deeply impressed upon the printed page, that nearly every reader is able to build up for himself a clear idea of this great friend and confidant of doctors and undertakers.

Mr Dickens, as a writer, may put in a just and indisputable claim for having directed the main course of the literature which now flows around us. From the smallest writer in the smallest magazine to the lofty Baron Macaulay himself, there are traces of

the great fiction-creator of the day. Everything that is now drawn or described must be drawn or described from the life, and not produced from the fevered imaginings of an unfed brain. Some carry the lessons of their master too far, and become mere reporters and takers of brokers' inventories. This style is not a true reflex of Mr Dickens's, for the great gift and charm of humorous analogy is wanting.

If we look at the so-called comic publications of the day, we see Mr Dickens's forms of satire and types of character nourishing pages that seem to have no power of creating food for themselves. Entertainments are sustained by that which he originated; the stage is beginning to surrender; and the very organs which set themselves up as his opponents are full to overflowing with illustrations drawn from his works.

Mr Dickens scarcely knows the force of the engine which he holds in his hands—has scarcely mastered the scope and destination of his great design. He is now delighting elegant wearers of opera-cloaks and carriers of bouquets, dangling loungers who come to satisfy an idle curiosity, and stout well-to-do middle-class citizens, who have been blessed with the taught ability to read and write. Descend a little lower in the social scale, and we come upon a land containing thousands—nay, millions—who are only to be reached through their eyes and ears; to whom a printed book is a black, blurred, mysterious mass, notwithstanding many Acts of Parliament, educational commissions, and school-houses remarkable for their imposing style of architecture. Yet these people are men and women with hearts and souls—people willing to be taught, if they can be taught easily (for at forty, in the intervals of heavy labour, it is a sore task even to learn to read)—people ready to pay for being taught—people who know little, and never will know much, of moral principles, and who can only be reached and improved through their emotional sympathies.

Here is a wide and a fruitful field for Mr Dickens to cultivate, and in such a cause they gain a dignity who descend.

AN AGREEABLE RATTLE.

I WAS walking along Lombard Street, one Friday afternoon, a few weeks ago, in no very cheerful mood, for the Bank had just raised the rate of discount one per cent., and I had several promising joint-stock schemes which I wished to place upon the market. What can be done at seven per cent. is simply impossible at eight, and I felt much like a man who is kept out of his property.

While in this unpleasant frame of mind, I came suddenly across a friend who was hit as hard as myself, but who was of a far more elastic disposition.

'Eight, Sam,' I said, 'I hardly expected it.'

'We shall have it higher,' was the annoying reply, 'if these joint-stock schemes increase and multiply.'

'Don't talk like a money-article,' I rejoined; 'you may just as well try to mop back the Atlantic.'

'Or swallow California,' he retorted.

'In ten years' time,' I said, somewhat pompously, 'no business requiring more than fifty thousand pounds' capital will be found in any other form than that of a limited liability company.'

'Don't prophesy, but tell us what to do during the next eight days.'

'I have no idea.'

'I have; we'll go to the Low Countries. A week's tour will do us both good, and give the "precious metals" time to flow in, and ease the market. There's something soothing in our present condition to go where little is thought of but money-making, and where the greatest banker bears the pleasant name of Hope.'

I agreed almost mechanically to this plan. We dined in the neighbourhood of Cornhill, and, to be strictly truthful, I may mention that we got outside a twopenny omnibus at the corner of Bishopsgate Street.

'To start the journey cheerfully,' said Sam, 'I'll give you a conundrum. Why need our conductor have little fear of the cholera?'

Of course I gave it up.

'Because (as you heard him tell the driver) he's got ten insides.'

When we reached the 'Flowerpot' we were asked to get down, and form two more 'insides' to oblige a costermonger.

'I've often been asked to get outside to oblige a lady,' said Sam, 'but this is quite a new sensation.'

A few minutes before seven o'clock in the evening we arrived at the Shoreditch Station. There seemed to be something very strange, if not radically wrong, in starting for 'the Continent' from this quarter of London; but there was little time for reflection. In less than two hours we found ourselves at Harwich—that is, at a platform and a pier with a few beacon lights, and we tottered at once on board a floating hotel, the steamer 'Avalon,' belonging to the Great Eastern Railway. For those who like a little sea, there are no channel steamers fitted up with more regard to the passengers' comfort than these Rotterdam and Harwich vessels. We took a light supper, went to bed, got up in the morning, and really washed and dressed ourselves—an operation that is not often performed on board a short-passage steamer for want of conveniences. At seven o'clock we were pleasantly taking our breakfast coffee on deck, as we floated up the Maas to Rotterdam, and criticizing scenery which is more remarkable for the industry that made it than for any picturesque quality. Land reclaimed from the sea has the same characteristics nearly all the world over; but rural Holland has contrived to give herself a distinctive character by the introduction of many windmills.

We took the Dutch custom-house officers on board from a boat in the river, so that our luggage was examined before we arrived at Rotterdam. When we got to the pier at eight o'clock, we had, therefore, nothing to do but to walk quietly on shore, and to enter an omnibus like ordinary citizens.

'Halloo!' shouted Sam, 'there's some imposition here. Where's our old friend, Rip Van Winkle, with the conical hat and balloon breeches? Where's the immortal hero of the "Cork Leg."'

Sam's observation was only too well founded. The men were

dressed in that sad imitation of evening costume which is peculiar to Thames pilots, and it was only the poorer women who wore caps, or metal head-dresses, like helmets.

Every Dutchman smoked in the omnibus without asking leave, and a boy about six years old sucked a cigar instead of a sugar-stick. We arrived at an hotel, and were received by the master, who was smoking, and by two waiters, who had evidently just put down their cigars. We dined at a very good *table-d'hôte*, where a pint bottle of Medoc was given to each of us, as part of the dinner, and where cigars and pipes were introduced almost before the dessert. We walked over the bridges, along the quays, and under the pleasant shade of the trees in this Dutch Venice, admired the flowers in the windows, and laughed at the mirrors so placed amongst them that the inmates of each house could see the whole traffic of the street. While so engaged, we became suddenly conscious of an unpleasant, overpowering smell.

'What can it be?' exclaimed Sam, who was accounted a wit. 'It can't be decayed tradesmen, the town's too thriving.'

'Decayed vegetables,' I answered.

Decayed vegetables it was, for on some of the canals was floating a thick scum of cabbage leaves, lettuce leaves, corks, stalks, bits of wood, and potato-parings. Men in black mud barges were dredging some of the streams, and some of the canals looked like the old pictures of the Fleet ditch, at the period when it was an open sewer, and not a shining river. The bargemen are not assisted by horses, but have to pole their craft along by digging into the bed of the river with their noses over the savoury flood. The canals not only run through the streets, but under them; and looking down a grating in the middle of a roadway, we saw a Dutch Charon and his companions smoking in the cool shade of a tunnel. The roads are not very smooth, and the bridges are constantly being raised for the passage of large craft, so that riding in hack carriages is not common. These vehicles are three shillings and sixpence an hour—a price far above the Continental average. In other respects—hotel living, for example—there is no difference between Dutch, or French, and Belgian prices.

'The people are wonderfully like the English in appearance,' remarked Sam, 'and wonderfully like them in their love for money-making.'

'The worst preparation for a journey,' I returned, attempting

to be philosophical, 'is to start with a belief that human nature is not the same in all countries. Conditions of living may differ'——

'Exactly,' interrupted Sam, showing a decided determination to cut me short; 'if you want a barber here, you go to a shop where a brass dish is fluttering before the door, like a gold fish at the end of an angler's rod; if you go to a place where the usual barber's pole is sticking out across the street, you either find yourself at the Burgomaster's, or at the office of some foreign consulate. Places where they work—their workshops, in fact—they call workhouses. Now in England a workhouse is the last house where you would look for industrial activity.'

From Rotterdam we went to Amsterdam by the railway which runs to the Hague, Leyden, and Haarlem, and found that such travelling in Holland was slow, but punctual. Sam thought that Hague had been politely altered from Ague, out of compliment to royalty, which had fixed its residence there, and certainly the country looked remarkably swampy. The fields, intersected by dykes instead of hedges, looked like a vast billiard-table, but rich and luxuriant.

'Ah!' exclaimed Sam, suddenly bursting into poetry,

> '"How weary, flat, fresh, and profitable,
> Seem to me all the uses of this world."'

'What must be a Dutchman's feelings,' I remarked, in a true spirit of cockney pride, 'when he first sees our Greenwich or Primrose Hill?'

'Or what he is even more likely to see,' returned Sam, 'the *Montagne de la Cour*, at Brussels.'

In Amsterdam we, of course, found another Dutch Venice, with canals even more putrid than those of Rotterdam. 'Her home is in the sea, and the rotten cabbage-leaf clings to the marble of her palaces.'

The old Spanish houses here give the city a very picturesque effect, though as fast as they are undermined by the ever-encroaching water, and fall or are pulled down, they are replaced with Parisian-looking houses. The French have a wonderful power of propagating their ideas. French shops are on the Dutch quays and boulevards, and the French language is largely spoken by the natives. The general aspect of many of the canal streets reminded

us very forcibly of Lower Thames Street, but the houses had a grand and noble look, although chiefly devoted to business. In Amsterdam, and some part of Rotterdam, the Englishman may see what life the old citizens of London led before it was the fashion to live out of the City. The cellars are devoted to goods, part of the ground floor to offices, and the drawing-room floor—large and lofty, in most cases, like the hall of some old City company—is the dwelling-house of the family. Above these are bed-rooms, divided by a storehouse for mere goods, from which drops a crane-chain, when required, in front of the drawing-room windows. In this store-room—amongst the bales and tubs—the female domestic servants are fond of sitting on a Sunday evening, reading a book, or doing a little needle-work, and flirting with their sweethearts in the distance.

Everywhere we came across the everlasting pipe and cigar, the churches even smelling of tobacco during service time like a tap-room. The actors at the theatres did not exactly smoke during the performance, but they spat upon the stage, which is almost as bad. We went to an open-air concert, where we heard the best band in Amsterdam; but though the selection of music was ambitious—embracing all schools, from Wagner to Auber—the execution wanted fire and precision. Leaving this concert we passed through the Jews' Street, a street that rivals Petticoat Lane, or the Jews' Street in Frankfort. The Jews in Amsterdam reach sixty or seventy thousand. The maniac noises and gesticulations made to sell a few pennyworths of pickled cucumber, showed us unchecked competition in its wildest moments. The only calm man in the jumping, shrieking, bawling crowd, was an old, bent, sallow-faced hermit, with blinking sore eyes, dressed in greasy rags, who watched over a few old Hebrew books displayed in a dirty basket. Perhaps there was something in him of the spirit of Erasmus, but why was he so dirty?

Before we left Holland we had some idea of going to Germany, but the trains to that country were so slow—something like twenty miles an hour being an express pace—that, as our time was very short, we gave up the notion.

'Do you understand much German?' I asked Sam, who was somewhat daring as a linguist.

'About a sausage and a half,' he answered, as if that was quite sufficient.

'Then, I think,' I returned, 'we'd better go to Belgium.'

To get to Belgium we had to go back to Rotterdam, and we made another railway circuit, this time by the way of Utrecht. The country was still as flat as a billiard-table, and as fresh as much water could make it. At Rotterdam we went on board a steamer, much like the Rhine boats, and sailed up the Rhine to Dordrecht, and from there to Moerdyk. On board this steamer we met the only two very fat Dutchmen we had seen, well fed and well dressed; 'clothed,' as Sam put it, 'in turtle and fine linen.' They gulped Dutch bitters before we started to give them an appetite, and as soon as the vessel began to move, they plunged down into the cabin and took their places at a very good *table-d'hôte* dinner. Here they ate bits of every dish, drank several French and German wines, and then went on deck and ordered coffee. As soon as the coffee was consumed, they sipped brandy and sugar, and by the time that was consumed we had arrived at Moerdyk. Here the Dutch-Belgian Railway awaited us, and we took our places for Antwerp. The travelling was just as slow as on the Dutch-Rhenish line, broken by an examination of luggage at the Belgian frontier. The passport nuisance is now happily got rid of in most parts of the Continent, thanks to the liberality of the French Emperor.

Antwerp may be shortly described as a fortified monastic town, with a fringe of docks—a combination of Canterbury and Wapping. The great election struggle between the clerical and liberal party was at its height, and the people in one of the low quarters were erecting an image to a favourite saint. The most poetical thing about the churches is their clear, ringing, musical chimes, and next to that their gray, worn exteriors. Many of them, however, are in such a state that they are obliged to be restored, a process which largely destroys their picturesque character. The interiors are mostly overloaded with decoration—bright wooden carvings, wonderful in their way, marble altar-pieces and pictures, all piled up together, or over each other, until the effect produced is that of a bazaar, like the Pantheon in Oxford Street. The grand simplicity of the Rouen churches is wholly wanting. Much, of course, is made of Rubens; but Rubens—colour excepted—was of the earth, earthy, and sadly deficient in true religious sentiment. Here, as in Holland, French house architecture is gradually replacing the fine old Spanish style, and the Hôtel de Ville is being restored in a way which makes it look like the Carlton Club.

From Antwerp we, of course, went to Brussels—that little Paris, which every man should see who wishes to thoroughly enjoy the greater city. Everywhere we appeared to be meeting our compatriots, the travelling English. At our hotel in the *Place Royale* we were treated like true Britons, and were supposed to be pining for beef-steaks at every hour in the day. To make this supposition more unjust, we, in common with the rest of the English, simply breakfasted upon eggs and bread-and-butter, while the only French party in the house were devouring beef-steaks and potatoes. The 'Cock-a-Doodle-Doo' coach called for us every morning to go to Waterloo, and the guard of the 'Cock-a-Doodle-Doo' aroused us every morning with the 'British Grenadiers,' badly played on a cornopean. Instead of going, however, to the field of battle, we mused upon the emptiness of human glory. The blood that was spilt on that great day has merely manured the fields until they show an exceptional fertility, and has sustained an English four-horse coach for many seasons.

While resting at Brussels we felt a growing desire to use the travellers' privilege of grumbling at the dinner-table. Sam began it. They brought us a leg of mutton and 'trimmings,' and when abroad, we like to leave the cookery of our native land behind us. The joint, as is too often the case when foreign meat is cooked in the English fashion, was decidedly, hopelessly tough.

'Do lambs ever have wooden legs, like Greenwich pensioners?' asked Sam.

'Why?' I inquired.

'Because if they do, we've got one of them by mistake.'

The French wine was bad and dear, but still we ventured upon a little champagne.

'What brand is that?' asked Sam, showing me the cork.

'*Perière Jouet*,' I answered.

'Ah!' said Sam, '*Perière Jouet, e i o u*, and sometimes *w* and *y*.'

When some very suspicious-looking beef was brought on by way of an *entrée*, Sam was compelled to address himself to the waiter, and he said:—

'I don't mind dining *à la carte*, but I object very much to dine *à la carte* and horse.'

'*Oui M'sieu*,' replied the waiter, who hardly understood a word

he said, and who immediately brought him a *hors-d'œuvre* of boiled salmon.

In the evening we attended a very good open-air concert, where the music was much better, although the admission fee was only half a franc, than it was at our two-franc concert in Amsterdam.

We also went to a popular half-franc theatre, called the *Théâtre-Lyrique*, where three or four thousand people, chiefly of the middle class, were assembled to witness a six-act drama entitled *Le Jésuite*. The plot of the play was of the *Hypocrite* class, designed to show the baneful influence which Jesuits may obtain over the female members of families. Every time the Jesuit came on, every time he moved across the stage, or made a 'point,' the whole audience howled at him like good-humoured wild beasts. The actor, a Frenchman, was popular, as was shown by great applause at the end of the piece; but the demonstration was made against the Jesuits. After witnessing this piece and its reception, we were not astonished at the electoral excitement which we met with everywhere.

Having seen that the Hôtel de Ville, the fine old houses near it, the old palace, and the mannikin were still standing, in spite of the French architectural invasion, we started for Ghent, where the electoral fever was still more strikingly manifested. The grand old market-places, vast, half-deserted areas as large as Russell Square, with the grass growing at their sides, were filled with nearly the whole population of the city. The voting was by ballot, the ballot-boxes were kept open until late at night, and yet no evil resulted, either from the mode or time of voting.

'It seems a pity,' I said, 'that a people who show so much political life, should allow their country to be the hot-bed of protection.'

'It seems a pity,' said Sam, 'that a people who show so much political life, should wear one of the clumsiest sabots ever tolerated. The economy of wooden shoes I can understand; but there must be much bad conservatism lingering in a country where the people shuffle about in a sabot like a barge, which has to be kept on the foot with hay stuffed behind the heels.'

From Ghent we went to Bruges, another fine, old, half-deserted city, where the grass was growing in some of the streets, and bare-footed friars were to be met with in the clerical quarters. The size

of the grand square struck us here, as at Ghent, and we easily imagined how much more important these cities must have been than the City of London, before the latter threw down its walls, and spread over the adjacent country.

From Ghent we went to Ostend, and after carefully inspecting it, admitted that it was one of the most sensible watering-places which we had seen for a long time. Nearly everything in the shape of amusement is ranged along the sea-shore. There is an admirably paved and raised promenade, more than a mile in length, and on the land side of this is built the Kursaal, the bath-rooms, and a number of restaurants and cafés. The visitors live here by the sea-side, and not, as in English watering-places, at frowsy lodgings. They get all their meals exactly when they want them, at the restaurants and sea-side hotels, and have no quarrels with lodging-house servants about fragments of cold mutton. Here, I am happy to say, I saw some of my countrywomen, whom I gallantly consider to be the loveliest ladies in the world, and whose complexions appeared brighter by contrast with the sallow cheeks of the Belgian damsels.

'There's the kind of girl,' I said to Sam, pointing out one of the most charming creatures on the promenade, 'who's calculated to make sunshine in a shady place.'

'The most disagreeable quality in a woman,' he replied. 'A girl that makes sunshine in a shady place would light a fire in the dog-days, and we all know what that would lead to.'

The time had now arrived for us to turn our steps homewards. Our week had expired; the Bank rate, as we had expected, had gone down one per cent.; and I, therefore, proposed that we should return from Antwerp by the long sea-passage.

'Do you know Dr Johnson's definition of a sea-voyage?' asked Sam.

'I do,' I returned. 'Imprisonment, with the chance of being drowned.'

'My sentiments exactly,' returned Sam, 'and I think in days when we hear of Cork pilots and Deal boatmen being lost at sea, we ought not to play the fool as amateur sailors.'

'These are nice sentiments for a descendant of the hardy Norsemen.'

'I'll give you my sentiments about the hardy Norsemen,' said

Sam; and he immediately burst into the following song, which was original if not conclusive:—

'The hardy Norseman came over the sea—
Luff, boys, luff, on the starboard bow—
The "shortest sea-passage" and rail chose he—
Pipe all hands to the starboard bow.

'Then the saltest old salt rose up and spake,
"Haul up coals to the top-gallant mast—
Show the hardy Norseman we're wide awake,
Pipe all hands to the top-gallant mast."

'"You come from the land of the Vikings, boy
(Pipe all hands to the starboard bow),
All Ratcliffe Highway wishes you joy
(Now, then, luff on the starboard bow).

'"The sea is rolling now mountains high
(Let out reef on the larboard stem),
We'll sail with the wind and the cloudy sky
(Let out reef on the larboard stem)."

'Said the hardy Norseman, "I hate the sea,
So haul away, let me get on shore,
For pitch-and-toss don't agree with me,
So haul away, let me get on shore."

'"What do I hear?" roared the rough old tar
"(Knock that fly off the mizen mast).
Is the hardy Norseman a land-lubbing cur?
(Knock that fly off the mizen mast).

'"It cannot be that a Viking's child,—
(What 'r'ye doing to the jib-boom sail?)
These men are enough to drive me wild
(Take in reef in the jib-boom sail!)

'"It cannot be that a Viking's son,
(Who's carved my name on the quarter-deck?)
Can despise the fame which his fathers won,
(Who's carved my name on the quarter-deck?)"

'Said the hardy Norseman, "the stormy sea—
Haul away, let me get on shore—
Had no more charms for my fathers than me,
So haul away—let me get on shore.

'"We're hardy Norsemen, and not Jack tars—
Why can't you hold the vessel still?—
Only used to horses or driving cars—
Why can't you hold the vessel still?

'"We're hardy folks at a steeple chase—
Oh, haul away, let me get on shore!"
Then the captain howled, with a purple face,
"Hold on, let the lubber creep on shore?"'

Of course, after this, we returned by the way of Calais and Dover, and found the money-market like ourselves, in a most healthy condition.

NEEDLEWOMEN.

THERE may be some few occupations followed by women whose hardships have escaped notice, but needlework is certainly not amongst the number. In its various forms, from the stitching of a coal sack, or a pair of fustian trousers in Shoreditch, to the construction of a gauzy court dress as large as a balloon in May Fair, it has received every attention from poets, journalists, and philanthropists. No branch of woman's labour has given birth to so many poetic wails, so many parliamentary investigations, so many letters in the newspapers, and so many suggestions by individuals and private committees.

A quarter of a century has glided by since its most painful features were dragged into the light, and still it continues fruitful of public scandals. If a young woman commits suicide by throwing herself into the river, if a middle-aged woman is found starved to death in a garret or a cellar, if another young woman—more delicately nurtured—is found dead, poisoned by bad air, over-work, and over-crowding in a West End sleeping-loft, the world is never astonished to hear that they were all needlewomen. The name of sempstress is so associated with misery, poverty, and oppression, that such an end is nearly always expected from such an employment.

As usual where very low wages necessarily prevail—the result of the market being thoroughly glutted with labourers—the employers are abused for not doing impossibilities. It is so easy for a mass of clamorous and indignant people to ask somebody to benefit somebody else, that the request is always loudly made. Most

'charitable suggestions' which appear in the public prints at a time of great popular excitement on some social question have this peculiarity, and it is therefore hardly surprising that they are seldom attended to. Some of these suggestions or demands—such as calling upon a particular employer to pay a sentimental rate of wages for the production of some article of universal consumption—are made with the most wonderful obstinacy, stupidity, and regularity. Though it may be shown, over and over again, that the employer is utterly helpless in such a case, that he has no more power to raise the rate of wages than to raise the tide six hours before its time, he is still asked and expected to do it. Because he remains passive, he is abused and pelted with hard names; is called an oppressor and grinder-down of the poor, and is pointed at in every way as a fit object to be sacrificed to popular indignation. In some cases he is driven to withdraw his capital from the hateful business, which diminishes the fund that finds employment for the workpeople; in others he is driven to encourage the invention of machinery which largely displaces labour. Since the 'Song of the Shirt' created its nine-days' sensation, and the hundreds of articles based upon it did all they could to cause a mutual hatred between employers and employed, the sewing machine has been perfected and adopted in every needlework establishment. Like all machinery, it has benefited the general public by cheapening the cost of production, and, in doing this, has rudely but wholesomely compelled thousands of half-starved needlewomen to seek other employments. It has enabled one active worker to stitch, hem, fell, bind, cord, gather, and embroider with a speed equal to ten ordinary sempstresses, on materials varying from the thinnest muslin to the thickest cloth.

Public attention, however, is not so much drawn at the present moment to the miserable needlework slavery of the East End as to the condition of the dressmakers and milliners at the West End of London. The recent death of a young dressmaker at one of the most fashionable court milliners, has caused so much public excitement and discussion that the whole vexed needlework question has been re-opened, and a royal commission has been appointed to collect evidence and make a report. The readiness with which these commissions are now granted, contrasts strongly with the obstructive policy formerly adopted by governments. Very little action, however, is now taken on the recommendation of such com-

missions, and they seem to be granted with a view of shelving troublesome subjects. If they ever answer the purpose of their promoters, it is by the publicity which they gain for their collected evidence and reports in the various newspapers. In 1842 one of these royal commissions disclosed the hardships and sufferings which thousands of young women and girls were then enduring from overwork and overcrowding in dressmaking establishments. The evidence then taken led to the formation of an 'Association for the Aid and Benefit of Dressmakers and Milliners,' which still exists at New Bond Street, under the management of Miss Newton. The president of this society is the Earl of Shaftesbury, and amongst the vice-presidents is the Right Hon. W. Cowper, M.P. The committee of ladies still includes, amongst many others, the Dowager Duchess of Sutherland, the Duchess of Argyle, Vicountess Sydney, Vicountess Jocelyn, Lady Ebury, and Miss Burdett Coutts. The chief objects of the association are—to establish a provident fund and a registry of workwomen and employers; to afford skilful medical attendance to the young women at a very trifling expense; to promote an improved system of ventilation in the workrooms; to induce ladies to allow sufficient time for the execution of orders; to afford pecuniary assistance to deserving young persons in cases of temporary distress or difficulty; to induce the principals of dressmaking and millinery establishments to limit the periods of actual work to twelve hours each day, and to abolish in all cases working on Sundays. The abolition of Sunday work has been chiefly due to the exertions of this association, but long hours of employment are still customary, and the 'season' is still as exacting as ever. In 1855, a bill was introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Shaftesbury, for limiting and regulating the hours of work in the London millinery establishments, but this was very wisely rejected by a committee of the House, who reported against it after taking evidence. It was felt that a short-hour bill to limit the time-contracts between full-grown, thinking young women and their employers, would be a well-meaning but mischievous and ridiculously inoperative piece of legislation. The principle of the Factory Act, on which this bill appeared to be based, was not to prevent men and women working overtime, but to prevent them selling the excessive labour of their children. As an attempt will probably be made next session to revive this bill, it is as well at once to state this honest objection to it.

The needlewomen of London, if we include all those who are partly as well as wholly dependent upon needlework for support, number at least one hundred thousand: the acknowledged sempstresses form nearly fifty thousand of this total, and twenty thousand of this fifty thousand may be classed under the head of milliners and dressmakers. Out of this last twenty thousand, not more than one-tenth, or two thousand, in-door needlewomen are spread amongst the employers in the West End and the circle around it. These workpeople may be divided into assistants, improvers, and apprentices, and they are distributed in the average proportion of about five residents to each house of business. The very centre of the fashionable circle, however, where the cream of the cream of 'court milliners' is found, is far more thickly planted with these 'young people.' Twenty, thirty, forty, and even sixty in-door needlewomen are found in each of these leading establishments, and here it is that the root of the overwork evil really lies. The area is remarkably small compared with the whole field of needleworkers. The houses may number about twenty, the workers may number about five or six hundred. We are not prepared to assert that no instances of overwork and consequent physical suffering can be found outside this narrow circle, nor that millinery and dressmaking is the most healthy of all female sedentary employments.

Overwork is too common in all businesses where the rate of wages is low, and the results of prolonged sedentary occupation are too notorious, to warrant such an assertion; but inasmuch as the whole trade of millinery and dressmaking is not now upon its trial, we may be pardoned for merely looking at what is immediately before us. The recent lamentable death of a young needlewoman at the West End occurred in one of the most fashionable houses of business, and the outcry that has been raised has been about the system pursued in those few houses. That system is soon explained. 'The girls in the large London houses' (so says an address lately issued by the Committee of the Ladies' Sanitary Association) 'are, with a few exceptions, thoroughly respectable. Character is required by the managers, and is maintained in their establishments. This is a great point, for many of them [the young women] are orphans, often well educated and well conducted, to whom character is dearer than life. In a good house of business they are able to secure protection. A girl is usually sent

to the business at the age of thirteen or fourteen, and bound for about three years. A premium of from twenty pounds to fifty pounds is paid on entrance, and she receives board and lodging during the time of her apprenticeship. At the end of that time she becomes an "improver" for one year or more, receives her board and lodging, but is still dependent on her own resources for her other wants. By this time her little capital is generally exhausted, and she begins to earn a salary varying according to her abilities from twelve pounds to fifty pounds a year.' This is a fair statement of this part of the case. 'Talent,' as it is called by the employers, that is, extraordinary taste, judgment, or power of forcing sales, is of course paid for much more liberally, and salaries varying from sixty pounds to one hundred and fifty pounds a year, with board and lodging, are frequently given to these valuable 'hands.' The in-door workers are paid just as much during the slack time, from September to March inclusive, as they are for the busy time, or 'season,' from April to August inclusive. They are allowed holidays varying from a fortnight to three months, during which time they receive their salaries, though, of course, they board with their friends. Much importance is attached, and perhaps justly, to the family protection given to these in-door workers, but the fact is overlooked that uncontrolled liberty is allowed them every Sunday.

The out-door workers, who, it may be unjustly, are regarded as a lower moral class, either take the work away to their lodgings, or work for stated hours in the house each day, coming in the morning, and going away at night, like clerks or warehousemen. Their average wages may be twelve or fourteen shillings a-week, and they are generally stronger than the in-door workers, probably because they work for shorter periods and get more exercise.

During the 'season,' from April to August, in the area we have named, that is, in the houses of the twenty chief 'court milliners,' it may be taken for granted that the in-door workers, not always including the younger apprentices, are kept at close labour for fourteen or sixteen hours a-day for many days together. 'Taking the year round' (says a fashionable court milliner, who gave evidence before a Committee of the House of Lords, touching the system pursued in her own establishment), 'I should think the young people work twelve hours a-day, because I give three months', or six weeks', or a month's holiday to every one.

To show that ours is a business solely for the season, I am glad to give holidays, because I have nothing for the young people to do out of the season. The nature of our business is different to any other; being a business of high fashion, the whole of that business must be transacted in five months, and we have to keep the establishment the rest of the year without paying our expenses. If it were a question of ten or twelve hours labour a-day all the year round, that would answer our purpose much better than the present arrangement, because everybody would live out of the house, and we should have no one to keep when we have no work to do. As it now is, we pay enormously for talent, as much as sixty, eighty, and a hundred pounds a-year for the first talent, and keep it six months without doing anything scarcely, in order that we may have it when we want it. It is impossible to say exactly the number of hours we work: at times the young people come into the work-rooms at nine, and leave at four or five; at other times they come at seven and leave at ten. From seven to eleven are the longest hours that any one works in my house, except on the occasion of a Queen's drawing-room, a funeral, or a marriage order, when we are compelled to work until it is done. I could not refuse work which will support my establishment the remaining time of the year: I must do it when it is offered to me; I cannot get it at other times. If the ladies could order their court dresses, and their dresses for the Queen's balls, and their toilets for the Spring, during our leisure time, we should make it a very profitable business indeed; but that cannot be done, inasmuch as the mode is not named for the season, nor are the fabrics ready. The Queen gives very short notices very often. Ladies come to me as late as four o'clock in the afternoon, and say, "I want a ball-dress; I am going by the four o'clock train to Windsor to-morrow;" and I am obliged to get it ready. Then I have a great many things to get done for the mail train on the next night, perhaps for a wedding in the north of England, or for a funeral in the west: we dare not refuse these orders, because, if we did, the ladies would go to another house and get served, and we should lose their custom for ever.'

This is a statement of the mistress's side of the case, made by a competent and confident witness, who was evidently free from any pressure or fear of philanthropic or other patrons. On the other hand, those who plead the cause of the workwomen state that the

pressure of the 'season's' work is generally too much for the young people in the fashionable houses. They believe that the system could not be kept up but for the constant succession of fresh workers who come from the country to supply the places of those who break down under the exertion. They assert (without stating on what evidence, if any) that not one in a hundred passes through this ordeal with unimpaired health. 'In the first place' (say the Ladies' Sanitary Association, before quoted), 'the most moderate amount of sedentary labour would be unhealthy if relieved by no exercise whatever. The apprentices seldom cross the threshold, except on Sundays. The rooms in which they work are nearly always badly ventilated; the rooms in which they sleep are worse. Add to this a yearly strain of four months' duration, when all the bodily powers are daily and systematically overtasked, when sixteen hours' daily labour are demanded from these victims of fashion, sitting all these hours in close rooms, or, still worse, standing over some delicate material which must not be injured by a touch, no wonder that they frequently faint at their task; indeed, this is so common that little or no notice is taken of it. Constant headache and pains in the back, loss of sight and loss of appetite, ending in complete prostration and consumption, are the results. We have the evidence of dressmakers who are married or gone into business, to prove that permanent injury is done to the health even of the strongest. Among the former we have numerous instances of distressing weakness from functional derangement, clearly traceable to the work, entailing great debility upon the sufferers, and without doubt upon their children.'

The evils resulting from bad ventilation in crowded work-rooms, and from overcrowding in sleeping-rooms, can hardly be overrated, and any agitation or even interference that will lessen these evils, will be thoroughly welcome. Most of the great millinery houses are either in old-fashioned back streets where the rooms are small and dark—as in many parts of May Fair—or in a fashionable thoroughfare, like Regent Street, where rents are enormously high. Of course the best rooms are reserved for show and reception rooms, and no one who has seen the space which a single court dress in all its virgin glory will occupy, can wonder that the largest apartments are secured to display such products of the milliner's art. The dining-room is often a cheerless apartment on the basement; the work-rooms, the low-roofed second and third floors, with extensions,

and the sleeping-rooms, the garrets at the top of the house, and a few stray side rooms and lumber closets. Arrangements of this kind, in some measure inevitable, are undoubtedly bad; but we have no evidence to show that there is any anxiety to get into houses where the accommodation is far superior. There are many firms—chiefly amongst the large draper-milliners and dressmakers—where the sanitary regulations are almost perfect, but the managers have no more the pick of the market than other less thoughtful employers, and have to pay precisely the same wages. These employers are undoubtedly acting right in the course they pursue, but it would be more satisfactory to see a more unmistakable demand for good ventilation and sleeping accommodation coming direct from the girls, than from philanthropic committees acting as their mouthpiece.

With regard to the vexed question of food, we may safely conclude that the meals provided in the chief houses are wholesome and substantial. It is so easy to get up frivolous complaints about stale bread, salt butter, boiled mutton, roast mutton, tough beef, salt beef, thin milk, stale eggs, or any eatables, that little attention need be paid to such school-girl grumblings. Allowances may be made for occasional ill-health and over-fatigue when a fretful impatience of food of any kind may be natural; but, as a rule, such complaints may be regarded as the commonplace criticisms which are met with at all houses where meals are supplied by contract. From the dining-table of a first-class boarding-house, to the eating-hall of a workhouse, such half-fanciful complaints are constantly made, and it is therefore not surprising to find them in millinery establishments.

The great evil, then, that we have to contend with now, is overwork during the 'season,' or five months in the year, at about twenty court milliners', who employ about five or six hundred needlewomen. 'The co-operation of ladies,' again says the Ladies' Sanitary Association, 'is a necessary element in the social reform to be achieved. They may ascertain with little difficulty the character of the house they employ, and whether its workpeople are treated with consideration. They may refrain from unreasonable demands as to the execution of their orders. They can pay their bills, a duty which has a still more important bearing on the question. Employers with large capital may not care about early payment—indeed, ladies have sometimes to complain that their

bills are not sent in, and they do well to complain, for the interest lost by late payments must be made up by large profits, so that they pay for delay, and suffer from the temptation to carelessness and extravagance induced by the habit of keeping a running account. To the smaller capitalist the system of long credit often leads to ruin. One employer stated to us that he had above five thousand pounds due to him, and was thereby brought to the verge of bankruptcy; and this is neither a rare nor an extreme instance. Besides this, the long-credit system keeps the business in the hands of a few capitalists. If ladies paid their bills quarterly, a greater number of work-women would be able to become principals in the business, and this would lead to a fairer division of the profits by making it easier for the employer to increase the number of workers.'

The spreading of the business during the height of the 'season,' and, indeed, all the year round, would materially relieve those who are overworked without receiving the usual benefit of working overtime. 'It has been proved,' continues the same address, 'that no overwork is really profitable—that the worker, when freshness and vigour are maintained by sufficient rest, does more and better work than when exhausted and harassed by fatigue. By securing sufficient out-door assistance in the early part of the season, so as to avoid beginning the late-hour system, the skilled inmates would be kept up to their highest pitch of energy and efficiency, and the result would, we believe, be found equally if not more profitable in the long run. A wholesome atmosphere would also powerfully conduce to the same end.'

We are glad to see that this address, which is more sensible than most philanthropic documents, concludes by advising the workwomen to combine as much as possible to protect their own interests. The good done by the 'Association for the Aid and Benefit of Dressmakers and Milliners,' is an encouragement to those who feel inclined to act on this suggestion. Anything that will infuse more self-reliance into this class cannot fail to do good. Well-meaning as that paternal system may be which professes to guard the conduct of the in-door workers with a watchful eye, it is questionable whether the young women would not make better members of society if they were taught to protect themselves, and to feel that they are responsible for their own actions. A great deal of bad, maudlin sentimentality is uttered about temptations

which it is assumed cannot be resisted; but these young women, like all young women, ought to understand that the duty really rests upon them of being their own guardians.

The millinery and dressmaking business, like too many female employments, suffers much from a want of earnestness in those who enter it as apprentices. It is only taken up as a make-shift, a pastime, a temporary occupation, and not as a handicraft which must be practised till death. There are few old milliners and dressmakers, and few married ones, and yet the young people fulfil their destiny and marry like other ladies. It is this matrimonial prospect—this release from the work-room, so certain to come—that creates a difficulty. It is almost impossible to obtain a sound organization for a trade which is supported chiefly by young and marriageable girls, who enter it merely to leave it.

The profits of general needlework would be much greater than they are, if there was less of what we may call amateur work in private families; and they would be greater still, if stitching was not universally held to be so very domestic and feminine.

A middle-class family circle, consisting chiefly of ladies, would doubtless be considered remarkably ill-regulated if the needle and the accompanying work-box were almost unknown within its precincts. If none of the ladies were able to trim a common bonnet, or make a common dress; if they were clumsy hands at hemming a pocket-handkerchief, or at darning a stocking; if they were wholly incapable of making a shirt, and even somewhat careless about stitching on shirt-buttons, it is not difficult to conceive the remarks that would be levelled at them by acquaintances. They would be spoken of as idle, lounging, unfeminine persons—as readers of worthless novels—as would-be fine ladies. And yet if these girls, with their mother at their head, were to quietly practise some handicraft that kept them from needlework or ornamental education; if instead of the eternal spinning of crochet antimacassars, or the practising of show-pieces on the piano, they were to thoroughly master some mechanical art requiring taste and delicacy of touch, they would be doing all the practical good in their power towards making a better market for the needlewomen. It might seem strange at first that the tutor ushered in came to teach the ladies watch-making, engraving on metal, artistic wood-cutting, inlaying woodwork, or one of a dozen other similar handicrafts; but this strangeness would wear off after a few visits. The handicraft would grow in interest

day by day, as most mechanical employments do, and would soon be considered less tedious than needlework, or the struggle with sonatas.

If all families of ladies who are dependent upon uncertain or slender incomes earned by husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers, were thus resolutely to turn their backs upon the needle, and to provide themselves with a more marketable accomplishment, they would be far better prepared for those reverses which unfortunately fall to the lot of so many of them. By keeping out of a market already glutted with female labour, they would benefit those poor work-women already in the market, and, at the same time, benefit themselves. They could hardly prepare themselves for any occupation that is not more productive than needlework, that is not more 'genteel,' or held in better estimation. Few employments at present sought after by women—especially young women—are, unfortunately, free from a taint of suspicion, the taint being all the stronger if the average rate of wages is very low. It is uncharitably assumed that poverty and vice must necessarily go together, and as needlewomen are, in the main, the lowest paid of nearly all human hand-workers, temptation is supposed to dog them in every conceivable shape, and to find them with little principle and power of resistance. To avoid entering a labour-market from which at present little profit and less honour is to be derived, can surely require very little strength of mind and judgment on the part of those who have to choose an occupation.

SWEEPS.

T has always been the fashion to regard the fireside as the altar of home—the seat of all the domestic virtues. Round that hallowed spot are supposed to be nourished all those tender feelings and sentiments which soften the harder features of humanity. There it is that the true father, the true mother, the true sister, and the true brother are grown; and there it is that society looks for its brightest ornaments. No

patriot or philanthropist, worthy of the name, ever sprung from any other soil, or was really moulded by any other influence.

As the fireside has done so much for the world at large, it seems a pity that it cannot do something for itself, and prevent the perpetuation of a cruel wrong which oppresses the weak and helpless. This wrong is so entirely a fireside wrong, and is so easily destroyed by fireside guardians, that it is difficult to believe in its existence. Public feeling, nearly a quarter of a century ago, condemned the climbing-boy system, and the result was an Act of Parliament,* to render the use of children in cleaning chimneys illegal, and to compel the use of a machine invented as a substitute. No particular machinery in the shape of inspectors was provided to see that this Act was not evaded, it being generally felt that each householder would willingly be his own inspector.

Much reliance was also placed upon informations laid by a few of the sweeps who used the machines against a few others who secretly clung to the old bad system. A few benevolent individuals —chiefly Quakers—formed themselves into associations to save children, under the provisions of the Act, from this bitter slavery; but beyond this there was no organized attempt to see that the master-sweeps did their duty.

More than twenty years have elapsed since the passing of this Act, and now there is too much reason to believe that the evil, never wholly destroyed, is gaining new life. The Birmingham Association for the Suppression of Climbing-boys—one of the associations we have just alluded to—is compelled to report that within the last few years seventy poor boys have been rescued from this wretched life in the Potteries alone. Mr Francis Wedgwood of Etruria, Stoke-upon-Trent, the treasurer of the North Staffordshire Association for Suppressing the Use of Climbing-boys, is compelled,

* The Act now in operation was passed in 1840; it is entitled 'An Act for the Regulation of Chimney Sweepers and Chimneys' (3 and 4 Vict. cap. 85). By this Act it is provided, that any person who, after the 1st of July, 1842, shall compel or knowingly allow any child or young person under the age of twenty-one years to enter a chimney or flue for the purpose of sweeping or coring the same, or for extinguishing fire therein, shall be liable to a penalty varying from £5 to £10, and in default of payment to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for any time not exceeding two months. It is also provided, that no child under sixteen years of age shall be apprenticed to a chimney-sweeper, and regulations are made for the proper construction of chimneys to prevent accidents from fire, and to facilitate the use of the sweeping machine.

at the close of 1862, to write as follows:—'No chimney need be climbed, and yet there is no very general strong feeling against the use of climbing-boys. Lords, squires, magistrates, and mayors have their chimneys so swept without shame, and, of course, are very unwilling to convict sweeps for doing the same for others. One justice, if I remember rightly, required the age of a little boy produced in court to be proved by certificate of baptism. Of course such a requirement made a conviction impossible.'

Another report, from Leicester, alluding to the state of things existing in 1856 and the subsequent years, says:—'The whole number of children and young persons illegally employed in this town and county was found to be upwards of one hundred.' These children were liberated by the efforts of a few individuals acting together; but as soon as the boys were let loose in Leicestershire, they were bought up and carried off to other counties, still to be kept in their cruel and illegal occupation.

This painful subject has recently engaged the attention of the commissioners appointed in the early part of 1862 to inquire into the number and condition of children under thirteen years of age, and young persons under eighteen years of age, employed in trades and manufactures not already regulated by law. In the course of their inquiry much evidence was tendered to them respecting the inefficiency and violation of the 'Chimney-Sweepers' Act,' and the cruelty consequently often inflicted upon a large number of unfortunate and helpless boys. From the evidence gathered in England, Ireland, and Scotland, it appears that several thousand children, varying in age from five years to fourteen years, and including many girls, are still condemned to this fireside life of slavery. The evil is greater throughout the country and in the second-class country towns than it is in London and the chief cities, but everywhere it shows unhealthy signs of revival. As this state of things could not exist without great apathy or connivance on the part of householders and fathers of families, it is charitable to suppose that they are ignorant of the cruelty which always did and must form a part of the climbing-boy system. What that system now is can best be shown by a narrative embodying the chief features of a sweep's life and calling, compounded from the evidence just laid before Parliament by the commissioners.

My name is George Stevens, and I am now a master-sweep, but

I began life fifty-years ago as a climbing-boy. I went to sweep at less than five years of age. I remember my first chimney very well, for I was told that there was a pork pie at the top. The masters used to carry a broad belt with a buckle round their waist to thrash the boys with. My master had three little girls who used to climb, and sleep in their sooty skins and clothes like the rest of us, and when they grew up young women they went about doing sweep journey-work, dressed in male dress.

I was so cruelly treated that I ran away. I went to Congleton, and Newcastle, and Chester, doubling back and so to Mold, and then I thought I was safe, but my master was pursuing a day behind me all the time. I had just hired myself to a man there, and was thinking that he looked kind, and his wife was giving me some tea, when I heard my old master's voice, and the tea choked me. I couldn't eat another morsel, though I was very hungry. He took me off at five o'clock in the morning. There was a league then between all the masters, and the sweep at Mold could not hold me against the other. We walked the whole way to Manchester without resting; he waited until he got to the forest, and then he nearly killed me.

Many people will say that this was under the old system, and that things are changed for the better now; but I can assure them that this is a great mistake. I have given a good deal of attention to this business, and I am sure that in the country, and in many large towns, the boys are as badly off as ever. Mr Herries, of Leicester, has got twenty-three cases of boys who have been killed in chimneys by being stifled, since 1840. I have known many cases of cruelty. A few years ago a boy died up a court in Manchester. He was apprenticed to a master-sweep in Haslingden. His food was bread which beggars sold to his master. On a Sunday, when his master's family had good dinners, he was still kept to the same hard fare. He had frequent and long journeys into the country, and was forced to leave his heavy and badly-fitting clogs at home. He was constantly exposed, barefooted, to rain and cold; he often lodged in outhouses upon straw, and had no chance of drying his wet clothes. He was very young, and his health failed, and then, being of no more use to his master, he was sent back to Manchester, with marks of most cruel neglect and ill-treatment upon him. He had a large abscess on his back, and one of his ears was nearly torn off. He lingered a few weeks in extreme

suffering, and then died. His death was painful, but I have known worse cases. There was one about seven or eight years ago at Nottingham. A little boy was smothered in a chimney there. The doctor who opened his body said *they had pulled the child's heart and liver all out of place in dragging him down.* That doctor can now be referred to, if necessary, to prove the truth of this.

Unfortunately there is no difficulty in getting boys for the climbing work, and as they are allowed to go about with the masters under the name of assistants, to carry the machine and bags, the law is easily broken. The thousands of climbing-boys are much worse off now, as the masters who keep them are only the least respectable ones. You can buy boys by the dozen. Parents themselves go hawking their children about. A woman was urging me the other day to take her boy, but I would not. Many want to get rid of their children and make a little money by it as well. The women sometimes are more hardened than the men. Only lately a woman who had sold her child to a sweep, followed me, and threatened to pull my hair for speaking against the use of climbing-boys. A man very recently said to me, 'You shall have my two lads for nothing,' instead of asking for the usual 10*s.* or £1. I have often had children as young as six years old offered to me in the same way. Sometimes as much as £5 has been paid for a boy, but very seldom. In Liverpool, where there are lots of bad women, you can get any quantity you want. I knew of a boy working at Burslem who was bought from Stockport; he was only six years old. No children can be got in the Potteries. There are no lots of bad women there as there are in the big towns; and besides, the Potteries give too much work for children for parents to want to get rid of their boys to sweeps. I know, however, of three cases at Tunstall, where two women, not married, sold their boys to a sweep there.

Nottingham is, perhaps, the most famous place for climbing-boys, on account of the chimneys being so narrow. A Nottingham boy, for this reason, is worth more to sell. A boy from this place was once stolen from me. As he was in the street a man seized him from behind in his arms, carried him off straight to a low lodging-house, and stupefied him with drugged tea. After the tea, the child fell into a deep sleep and lost all appetite. An inspector and I traced him to Hull. The boy was so glad to find that 'master' had come. The man had said that if they had got him

to France, they should have had £10 for him. There was another boy found with him. The stealer was a sweep at Hull; letters were found on him giving orders for more boys, and these letters were read before the magistrates. The prosecution was afterwards dropped, as the magistrate said the man must be transported for kidnapping, if it were pressed. He paid £20, and promised not to do it again. About the same time three climbing-boys were missed from Nottingham, and traced by their masters to a cellar where they were hidden. The eldest was not more than ten years of age, and they were going to be sent to Hull, and from there to France.

I have heard of many cases of the same kind in Derby, Leicester, and other towns. I hear from sweeps that come from other parts that this is still the regular thing to this day. I have myself had several letters from distant places asking me to send boys, or to say where some could be got. I had such a letter last summer, offering to pay me well and give me a sovereign. The way it is done is this—to find some poor boy and tell him that you know of a nice place where there is plenty of food and clothes, deluding him all the while, until you send him off by the train. This is more done now, because boys may not be got from the union as they formerly were. Besides this, boys are 'trafficked' about from one master to another, 10*s.* or so being given for the 'lent' of them. Whether they ever get back or not depends often on whether they have parents who care to look after them. In some cases they are not heard of for years, and sometimes never again. I remember well two nice little boys (brothers), aged nine and eleven, when I was an apprentice, being sold one Sunday morning for 30*s.* the two. A brute of a journeyman used to knock them about very much before. They were bought by another journeyman sweep, and put into a country waggon and sent off. They were never heard of again. The poor widow of a mother used to come backwards and forwards to our place to make inquiries, but she could never hear any tidings of them.

No one knows what the boys have to go through to be trained but those who have been climbing-boys, like myself. In learning a child you can't be soft with him; you must use violence. I have kept a lad four hours up a chimney when he was so sore he could scarcely move, but I wouldn't let him come down until he had finished. I shudder now when I think of it. It has often made my heart ache to hear them wail, even when I was what you may call a party

to it. I have seen boys go to bed with their knees and elbows scabbed and raw, and the inside of their thighs all skinned. I have seen five or six boys sleeping in dirty straw, banked up with stones, in a dark cellar, covered with soot-bags, which stuck in their wounds. The bags were the same they had used in the day—wet or dry. One could read, and they all subscribed for a candle for him to amuse them with a book when they were in bed. I have seen the steam from their bodies so thick as to obscure the light, so that the boy couldn't read. Dozens of such children die of consumption. They get up to their work in all weathers, and often at two and three in the morning. They are filthy in their habits, and often wear one shirt right through until it is done with. I, myself, have been for fifteen months without being washed, except by the rain, until I was almost eaten away by vermin. Formerly the sweeps, as they said themselves, had three washes a year—viz., at Whitsuntide, Goose Fair (October), and Christmas. I once knew a sweep who had never been washed, and another who had never been sober. The custom of 'sleeping black,' as it is called, is still very common, and you may often hear the men and boys 'dusting' themselves in the morning.

Most masters prefer to take their climbing-boys very young, as they learn more readily. Six years is considered a nice trainable age. I have known two at least of my neighbours' children begin at the age of five. I once saw a child only four years and a half old in the market-place in his sooty clothes, with his scraper in his hand. Some people said, 'Look at that little fellow; he is not four.' One man, however, standing by, said, 'He's four and a half; his father told me his birthday, and said that he began when he was four, and that he would make a nice little climber.'

I have had boys as young as this, but I never liked them. They were too weak, and I was afraid they might go off. It is no light thing having a life lost in your service. They go off just as quietly as you might fall asleep in your chair by the fire after you had had two or three glasses of strong drink. A son of mine, as well as myself, was very nearly gone so once, and I was a long time before I came round.

If, as often happens, a boy is gloomy, or sleepy, or anywise 'linty,' and you have other jobs on at the same time, though I should be as kind as I could, yet, as I said before, you must ill treat him somehow. Sometimes you will strike him with the hand,

sometimes with the brush. It is remembering the cruelty which I have suffered which makes me so strong against boys being still employed. I have the marks of it on my body now, and I believe the biggest part of the sweeps in the town have. I have a deep scar on the bottom of the calf of my leg which was made by my master with an ash-plant—a young ash-tree that is supple and will not break. The limb was cut to the bone, which had to be scraped to heal the wound. I was six years old at the time. I have marks of nailed boots in other parts of my body. It was a common thing with sweeps to speak of 'breaking-in' a boy; if he was hard, like a ground-road or a stone, they gave it up. It is necessary to harden the children's flesh when they begin the work. This is done by rubbing it chiefly on the elbows and knees, with the strongest brine, such as you may get from a pork-shop, before a fire. You must stand over them with a stick while the rubbing is going on.

At first they will come back from their work with their arms and knees streaming with blood, and the knees looking as if the caps had been pulled off. Then they must be rubbed with brine again, and perhaps go off at once to another chimney. In some boys I have heard that the flesh does not harden for years. I once found a boy in the market-place, about eight years of age, who had run away from some place of correction, and who offered himself to me. Part of his knee-caps had got torn off, the gristle all showed white, and the guiders (tendons) all round were like white string, or an imitation of white cotton; his back was covered with sores all the way up. To harden his knees, a salt lotion, simmered with hot cinders, was put on them; and to make him hold them straight under this, he had a brush-tail tied up and down his back, and something else like it in front, and he was made to walk in this way twenty, forty, or fifty times up and down the room. He counted each time, once up and once down 'one.' It was like killing him, and I had to stand by and see it all. However, he was the clumsiest boy I ever saw, and had no activity.

Some use the water from a smithy in which iron is hardened, others salt and water; but I think that is no good at all, but makes it worse. Besides all this, there is what the boys suffer from the employment itself; they must go barefoot even on the coldest winter mornings, or the soot would shake from their trousers into their boots, and gall and fester their feet. I have often carried boys myself on my back, out of pity to them at such times. Then,

in some, the climbing scrapes the flesh very much; and from 'sleeping black' and breathing the soot all night, they get the sooty wart or cancer. The parts which this disease gets hold of are generally eaten away; the sooty warts are sometimes, however, cut out.

Boys suffer much from blisters got in climbing up hot flues, and also in other ways. Sometimes a loose bit of mortar falls and catches them in the waistband of their trousers, and, as there is always very little room to spare, it easily fixes them. The more they twist to get free, the tighter they stick. A piece no bigger than an egg will sometimes do this. Boys get stuck in other ways, especially if they are clumsy at the work. I knew a boy who went up a chimney at nine one morning, and was fixed there till ten the next morning, by which time a bricklayer had opened the chimney from above, and dug him out. A boy was found dead in a flue in this way, at the West End of London, about two years ago, and his master was only fined heavily. Another man, in Eastcheap, was fined last summer for using a boy. Few informations, however, have been laid in London of late years, although the use of boys is undoubtedly on the increase.

The common price in the London trade for the use of a climbing-boy is half-a-crown for the job, and the nine hundred ill-constructed flues of the Houses of Parliament have all been lately 'cored' by five boys, in direct opposition to the law. An idea of the importance of chimney-sweeping in large towns may be formed from the fact, that the Bank of England allows its contractor £400 a year for this work.

The common hour for beginning work in London is about four o'clock in the morning, and work goes on at any hour up to nine o'clock at night. The usual hours that the boys work in the small country towns are eight or nine—it is only morning's work; but in the larger towns they work for twelve or sixteen hours daily. The younger they are the more they labour, as the masters can get through more work with the smallest boys. Some masters work short hours, and give their boys a chance of going to school, but not always with the consent of their employers—the householders. A lady in Nottingham who wished to have her chimneys swept in the evening, and could not get the work done by her sweeper for this reason, exclaimed, 'A chimney-sweep, indeed, wanting education! what next?'

When the boys get too big to climb, which in town chimneys is about fifteen or sixteen, and in the large country chimneys a few years older, they are unfitted for other employments, and often do nothing, or worse. They fall into the ranks as criminals, and no prison is ever without one at least of this unfortunate, ill-treated class. Scarcely one in a hundred of them can write, and not six in a hundred of them can read. When they get older they seldom improve. They have not been accustomed to education when young, and they don't think of it.

The Chimney-Sweepers' Act, as I have said before, is not thought much of, and is broken through every day. In Yorkshire, where there is no association to see the Act enforced, the climbing system is very bad. In all Sheffield, when Mr Roberts and Mr Montgomery were alive, there was not one boy, and now there are twenty-two, varying from five to ten years of age; there are also several in the villages about. Bury was free for four years, now there is one. There are fourteen at Chester. In Nottingham there are twenty; and in all the towns northward to Newcastle-on-Tyne (Halifax excepted), there are from two to ten boys employed. It is the same all over South Staffordshire, also at Coventry, Ashby, Leamington, Bridgenorth, Wolverhampton, Birkenhead, etc. I could give the names of fifty other towns where climbing is going on. As I have said before, it is not abandoned in London and its suburbs, very young boys being employed. In the county of Kent there are many, especially in Maidstone and Gravesend; also at Greenwich and Woolwich. At Birmingham, where, during several years, 'The Association for the Suppression of the Use of Climbing-boys' has been taking active measures to enforce the Act of Parliament, and where nearly five hundred pounds have been thus expended in the last five years, twenty-five boys are employed. Some are very young, and one poor child, not more than seven or eight years old, can scarcely walk along the streets from sores and bruises received in climbing. I am told his master is going to have pads made like those of horses for his knees. A child was dragged out of bed at two o'clock in the morning to sweep the chimneys at a certain noble lord's mansion in that county, and at another noble baron's house climbing-boys are always used. At Wakefield there is a man who has three or four climbing-boys, at Blackburn another, at Preston another, at Rochdale another. At Stockport, the other day, I saw a child of about eight with a sweep

who had just come out of gaol; and I know of another sweep who keeps children, who has been committed more than thirty times, for every kind of offence. At Ashton, last December, a sweep was fined for sending a boy, aged seven, up a chimney on fire, by which the poor child was dreadfully burnt; and at Whitchurch there is a boy with a wound on his head an inch and a half long, which his master gave him with a poker. Those masters who have never climbed are by far the most barbarous.

All this cruelty is not only illegal but unnecessary. Though machines will do the work well, and are not dear, there is a great antipathy to them amongst the old masters. It is mere laziness that causes this. The machine requires working about to make it do the sweeping properly: it is much easier to stand below, gossiping with the housemaid, and send a boy up the chimney. Journeymen who go about with the boys, working, as is frequently the case, for masters who were never apprenticed—travelling tinkers, and such like, who know nothing of the trade—speak against the machine to save themselves the trouble of using it. They generally work with closed doors, so that no one may see what is done. Want of capital has something to do with it at times, though not always. A common machine with iron fittings costs twenty-five shillings; a good one with brass fittings, which are much lighter, can be had for about two pounds; and the best, with all extras complete, for three pounds. With yearly repairs and all, I have not laid out more than equal to two good new machines in twenty years, and parts of my first are still in use. Careless workmen, of course, may wear out a machine much sooner, perhaps in about four years.

There may be chimneys which cannot be swept by a machine, but I have never seen one. If there is any slope at all it can be done by means of traps. If people only thought of what the boys suffer they would not have the heart to mind the small expense of traps. Instead of this, the use of boys is much encouraged by householders who will not have their chimneys swept by the machine. I have myself lost a good deal of custom which I should otherwise have, and some which I formerly had, at large houses and public establishments, because I will not use boys. That reason was, of course, not given, but I was sent away after I refused. I have been sent away even from magistrates' houses,

and, in some cases, even by ladies who have professed to pity the boys.

In many public buildings now being built or recently built, the Act of Parliament relating to the form of chimneys is disregarded alike by architects, builders, and landlords. Some of the 'model' lodging-houses are the worst. All the old chimneys that I have known for more than forty years could be altered to suit the machine; but in Piccadilly and the large houses at the West End of London, where they are generally the worst, the objection to altering them is the strongest. It is these people who make the law, and they are the first to break it. They don't go so far as to positively say they will have a boy, but they say, 'I won't have my house pulled about,' and leave the rest to take care of itself.

It would be a very good thing to make the law positive, and say, 'boys shall *not* be allowed.' There should be a penalty on the landlord if his chimneys are so built that the machine cannot be used in them, and a penalty on the tenant for having a boy. A tenant going into a house for a short time, say for a year or two, doesn't like to go to the expense of alterations; but if landlords were made liable they would look into the state of the chimneys when they buy a house. They never think of this now. Of course, at present, they cannot be called to account for chimneys which they didn't build themselves, and I am afraid they are too strong a party in Parliament ever to allow themselves to be called to account for anything.

This is no imaginary narrative compiled to create a sensation. Every statement in it has been collected in the form of evidence, and will doubtless be used to stimulate further legislation on the subject. Further reliable evidence has also been gathered to prove that all fears of the increased risk of fire from what we must now call the proposed abolition of climbing-boys are entirely without foundation.

This is no case in which a large army of government inspectors will be wanted if the public—if fathers and mothers of families—will do their duty. That they have not done their duty hitherto is painfully apparent throughout the course of this inquiry. 'We should not do justice,' say the Children's Em-

ployment Commissioners, 'to a large number of master sweeps, were we not to state that many of their number, both in a large and small way of business, have highly distinguished themselves by their disinterested and humane efforts to suppress this cruel system —frequently to their own pecuniary loss. In our opinion, it is the public, more than the sweeps, who are responsible for the revival and extension of these great evils—physical, moral, and religious—which it was the benevolent object of the legislature to suppress.' Surely the guardians of the homes of England—those homes that are always referred to with so much national pride—will do something to remove this great reproach from their doors. They will hardly allow themselves to be outdone in humanity by common chimney-sweeps. The full power of destroying this infant slavery is ready in their hands, if they will only rouse themselves and use it. Surely they will not lie snoring in their beds when those hoarse plaintive cries are heard in the late night or early morning at their doors, leaving the duty of watching to their yawning cooks and housemaids.*

* The Legislature has amended the Chimney Sweepers' Act of the year 1840, by an Act of the present Session, and it will take effect on the 1st November. From that date a chimney-sweeper must not use in his occupation a child under ten years of age, nor is he on entering a house to sweep a chimney to take with him a person in his employ under sixteen years of age. For acting in contravention to each section he is liable to a fine of £10. In order to check an infringement of either statute, and to prevent children from descending or ascending any chimney, the Justices are empowered to imprison the offenders—that is, the master sweeps—for a period of six months with or without hard labour. Furthermore, instead of £5 penalties they may be increased to £10. 'In any prosecution of a chimney-sweeper for any offence against the Principal Act or against this Act, where the age of any young person or child comes in question, the proof of the age of such young person or child shall be on the defendant.'

WONDERFUL POLICEMEN.

A POPULAR delusion has a wonderful grip on life. You may jump upon it, you may kick it, you may stab it in the back, or squeeze it by the throat, and still it will not die. It may kill itself, to all appearance, by its own clumsiness, and still it will not die. Like harlequin in the pantomime, it may seem to bury itself in the earth, but only to crop up again in another place.

The detective system is a pre-eminently vigorous popular delusion — a vulgar error that nothing seems to injure. Its reputation is based upon little that is more substantial than an idle feeling of wonder—a gaping curiosity that is excited by the merest trifles. Dress is at the bottom of most popular delusions, and it is at the bottom of this. The scum of a village, after enlisting in the army, no sooner appear in their red garments, than they find themselves objects of hero-worship. Their hats are handled with reverence, their coat-tails are admiringly examined, and they fall into numerous legacies of tobacco and beer. A few months before they would have been hurried to the stocks or the cage: but now they can command the best room in the pot-house. They have done nothing, as yet, but put on a few red coats and military trappings; but this is sufficient to raise them above the village. Their wages and position may be lower than that of the labourer toiling in the fields—their active utility may be far lower—but they have got the magic garments.

In the appreciation of the police force, this coat-worship takes an exactly opposite direction. The army would be looked upon as nothing without their uniforms; the police are looked upon as nothing with them. Wherever half a dozen people are gathered together there is a policeman in the midst, but it is the mob which bring the officer, and not the officer the mob. No town, or neighbourhood, or village ever showed any admiration for the plain blue

suit with white binding, and the shiny hat; no drill-meetings of any divisions, from A to Z, were ever attended by an eager public; no triumphs of the wooden truncheon have ever been immortalized on canvas by illustrious battle-painters. Even at the doors of six-penny photographers—doors that you cannot pass without being stopped by touters—you may see a hundred muddy-looking soldiers figuring in various positions, but never a single muddy-looking policeman. His pay may be good, his labour may be useful and necessary, but his uniform is not popular, because it is not provocative of wonder.

The moment, however, the policeman returns to 'plain clothes,' without ceasing to be a policeman, he is amply repaid by the public for their former neglect. No celebrated low-comedian walking along the Strand—no literary 'lion' at an evening party—no pugilistic champion after a fight for the belt—can produce more excitement than a well-known police officer in 'plain clothes.' Something very serious must be in the wind when the 'indefatigable' and 'intelligent' Sergeant Burleigh is seen in a common 'every-day frock-coat,' and a pair of 'sixteen-shilling' trousers. When the round red face of 'Meadows the detective' is recognized under a wide-awake hat, over a theatrical-looking smock-frock, and between a pair of false red whiskers, the little knot who recognize him have no doubt that some gigantic robbery will be immediately exposed, or some 'mysterious murderer' unearthed from his den. They never reflect that as 'Meadows' is known to them, he may be and is known to hundreds more, and especially to those regular criminals whom he is supposed to be working to destroy. He winks—he nods—he puts on many ostentatious disguises—he rejoices in the name of a 'detective;' he is often patted on the back by magistrates; he sometimes does a little private business as a spy; and he rather nourishes the growth of crime, by stopping the appointment of a real *preventive* police. He may be familiar with all the small thieves of the metropolis, as many rat-catchers and sewer-searchers are familiar with all the small rats; and in neither case are the vermin checked or destroyed before they develop into far more serious nuisances. 'Detective Meadows's' plan—the plan of every policeman in plain or eccentric clothes, is to watch and tend the criminal fruit until it is rotten with ripeness, and then to shake it gently into the lap of justice. He never nips it in the bud. A trial for petty thieving brings as little reputation to the

'detective' as it does to the Old Bailey barrister. So, petty thieves are merely marked, and then are left to grow. Sometimes they not only grow, but escape the net that is laid for them, and these are the 'detective's' failures, which we seldom hear of. We always hear of the successes, and thus the popular belief in 'intelligent officers' is kept up.

When we come to exceptional crimes—to those outbursts of individual iniquity which are even greater disturbers of society than the steady vices of the dangerous classes—we then find the hollowness of the 'detective' system. In the first place, it never moves without the promise of a heavy reward, and its notion of its own value is based upon its reputation. In the next place, it seldom does more than constitute itself a centre to which any information may flow; and what is brought to it voluntarily it takes credit for discovering. Its silence is often the silence of those who have really nothing to say, and its paraded 'investigations' mere devices to gain time, in the hope that something may turn up.

A little reflection ought to convince the most sensible believers in the detective system that a policeman in plain clothes is not so vastly superior to a policeman in uniform. To make a 'detective,' such as half the 'intelligent officers' are supposed to be, you require a most remarkable combination of qualities. You must have a power of observation such as is given to few, and a logical faculty such as seldom exists in conjunction with this power of observation. You must have the qualities of patience, endurance, and self-possession, no slender degree of imitative talent, and a perception of all the finest shades of evidence. Edgar Poe had many requisites for a good detective; and if the genius Ricardo, the political economist, were boiled down with that of Charles Dickens, we might possibly get the particular combination that we want. It must not be forgotten that the business of a detective, even when it is set in motion for the pure benefit of society, has generally too much of the spy about it to suit the feelings of a gentleman. Those who are best adapted for skilled detectives are prevented from doing the work by high scruples and high taste.

The policemen in plain clothes—the regular and only 'detectives'—may do their work as well as their ability will allow them; but it is absurd to suppose that they can see much further into millstones than half of their neighbours. Their inflated reputation has been swollen more by the stupidity of criminals than by their

own sagacity. A forging clerk, or a fraudulent banker, never appears to have any inventive genius, and while one is sure to go to Liverpool to embark for America, the other is as certain to go to Paris. The 'detective' has only to hasten to one of these places, and secure his prisoner, when the public will exclaim—'What a very intelligent officer!' The officer may be intelligent, as far as his intelligence goes, but this is never very far. He will be able to unravel coarse complications on a level with his own powers; but when any superior mental agency has been at work, he is thrown entirely off the scent. The Waterloo Bridge tragedy—still an unsolved mystery—is a proof of this; and no detective system ought to hold up its head as long as *that* murderer remains undiscovered. It is a lasting disgrace to any body of men, who have nothing else but 'detecting' to do, that they have never got to the bottom of this notorious crime and many others. If the delusion about the sagacity of policemen in plain clothes is not to be dispelled, let us at least not so employ 'detectives' as to defeat the ends of justice.

'CASH PAYMENTS.'

THOMAS CARLYLE has declared cash payments to be the sole *nexus* between man and man, and, for once, he appears to have hit upon a truth. Disciples of that school of Political Economy in which John Ruskin is a distinguished preacher, would have us prefer sixpences to shillings, and conduct our business upon sentimental principles. Those who cultivate the 'roots of honour' in obedience to such teachers, will find them sprouting, before long, in a Bankruptcy Law Court. The true 'roots of honour' are cash payments. If Mr Ruskin, senior, had acted throughout his long business life as Mr Ruskin, junior, preaches, the doctrine of sentimental trade would not have been sent forth from such a comfortable pulpit. There is nothing like hard work for a bare living to brush the cobwebs out of a man's brain.

Cash payments are the sole *nexus* between man and man, and have been from the remotest antiquity. In the shield of Achilles, as described by Homer, a tribunal is represented, before which appear the plaintiff and defendant, contesting as to the amount of 'blood-fine' to be paid by the accused. In the Northern and Teutonic laws of Europe the varieties of 'blood-fines,' ranging from homicide to the squeezing of a free maiden's arm a little too tightly, are set forth in the most precise terms. The Salic law is full of such enactments; the English law is not free from them. We now draw the line at murder. Mr Greenacre is not allowed to compound with the family of the slain; but violent assaults of different kinds may be indulged in at various prices. You can have a splendid article in this way, from most magistrates, for about five pounds, and an inferior quality of assault at two guineas. The old laws of 'the barbarians' assigned a cash payment to the wronged in proportion to the injury inflicted. If one man struck another on the head, so as to draw blood and cause it to flow to the earth, the assailant had to pay to the assailed six hundred pence. If the blow was so severe as to crack the skull, the price was nine hundred pence. Modern civilization has acted on the principle of these laws of the 'barbarians,' and Lord Campbell's Act restores the old system of 'blood-fine,' by compelling the wrong-doer to bestow upon the sufferer, or his heirs, such pecuniary compensation as a jury may determine.

While the modern law, however, has provided a scale of penalties, on the one hand, to be inflicted upon assailants and clumsy people, it has provided, on the other, a loophole for escape in the Insolvent Debtors Court. A jury may impose a 'blood-fine,' and a commissioner may decree that the insolvent is unable to pay it. While the wrong-doer is marked black in one department of the law, he is washed white in another. At this point it is that the system of assurance steps in, and secures that cash-payment to mankind without which life would be an empty name. Divines may speak against money as 'filthy lucre,' and currency-doctors may quarrel over it as 'circulating medium,' but it appears to be a very popular salve for broken heads, and most other afflictions of humanity. The dart of death is often tipped with gold, and hardly has the coffin disappeared through one door, when the bank-notes of the 'life-office' come in at another.

A curious catalogue is now before us—the list of the different

claims paid during the last year for non-fatal accidents by the 'Accidental Death Insurance Company.' There are more than a thousand individual claims, which vary very much in amount, the payments being regulated by the number of days or weeks the insurer was wholly disabled by the accident, and by the sum for which he was insured. When a man proceeds to insure his life he assesses the vital spark as highly as he can, and pays an annual premium bearing a certain proportion to this assessment. Accident insurances are managed on the same principle, and while one man considers his time worth ten shillings a week, another thinks he is worth ten pounds. The result is, that, according to the company's way of putting the accounts before the public, 'contused heads' are quoted at as many different prices as ducks or chickens in Leadenhall Market.

The list is interesting, because it shows the marvellous inequality of the human race. One man's little finger is worth more than another man's whole body; and one man's big toe is worth the heads of three other fellow-creatures. A fractured collar-bone at Welwyn fetched twice as much as several ribs in London; and an ankle was injured at Preston for three pounds sterling, when it cost nine pounds to injure another at Ely. A fall, from orange-peel, at Belfast, was eleven pounds seventeen shillings and twopence; and a fall of iron at Oaken Gates, only one pound and eleven shillings. The breaking of a bottle at Northampton was two pounds seventeen shillings and a penny (the penny probably being paid for the bottle); and the breaking of a shaft at Rotherfield, two pounds nineteen shillings and twopence. 'J. C.,' of Bridgewater, charges forty pounds for crossing a ditch; 'T. C.,' of Broughton, charges three pounds for jumping a ditch; and 'J. S.,' of Taunton, charges twenty-seven pounds for stepping over a ditch. The fall of a bottle at Huntingdon is one pound ten shillings; the bursting of a bottle at Colchester is one pound ten shillings and six pence. 'G. G.,' of Milford, charges two pounds two shillings and tenpence for embarking on ship; and 'W. N. B.,' of Shaldon, charges one pound ten shillings for being washed overboard. Falls, cuts, and sprains appear to be the most common 'visitations.' Broken heads are plentiful; and we are surprised at not finding in this curious price-current the charge for a few broken hearts. These last delicacies are assessed at a money value in cases of 'breach of promise,' and why not in the list of an Accident In-

surance Company? A few of the bruises enumerated, we fancy, must have arisen from fights, for nothing is more easy than to call a black-eye a 'contusion.' If such an 'accident' were charged to the company at three pounds ten shillings, a skilful black-eye artist * would paint over the 'contusion' for the odd money, leaving a clear gain of three pounds on the transaction.

The cheapest accident appears to be 'a fall of rock' at Bethesda, and for this the company only have to pay twelve shillings and tenpence.

A list like this, where different parts of the human body are quoted, like carcases at a meat-salesman's, is more calculated to teach humility than a hundred tracts and sermons. It shows us how easily we are reduced to cash-payments, and cash-payments in the most contemptible quantities. A terrible fuss was made about Shylock's pound of flesh, when here are dozens of cut legs, hands, and arms, from one pound one and upwards.

ROADS.

IT was once laid down by a very eminent writer, that 'man is the least transportable species of luggage.' He cannot be tied up in a parcel, taken down to a booking-office, and sent wherever a carrier may choose to take him. Unless he is a Queen's messenger, a commercial traveller, a rural postman, or some such wandering officer, he picks his road, and if there is no road to pick, he stays at home. With every disposition to travel and see the world, he will only move from his fireside or his garden on certain conditions. In one age he demands a pack-horse, going at the rate of two miles an hour; in another he asks for a 'flying-coach;' and in another he ventures his limbs in a four-horse mail. Travelling is an art, like ground and lofty tumbling, which can only be learnt by degrees. It is a question of confidence. From the handspring you go to the flip-flap, and from

* 'BLACK-EYES! AND ACCIDENTS!—Mr Skrymisher eradicates blackness without pain or injury in half an hour.'—See Advertisements, Public Press.

the flip-flap to the summersault. The traveller who once had his doubts about stage-coaches, leaps from them on to the luggage-train, and from the luggage-train to the wild express. Like the traditional beggar on horseback, he is often a noisy upstart. He will hardly allow the poor iron-horse five minutes to take in water, and grumbles at the slow speed of fifty miles an hour.

As we look back a few years into the past, we are surprised to find how the world seems to have shrunk up. We walk distances, three or four times a day now, which our grandfathers used to regard as a long coach journey. We never rise early to catch a Paddington coach in these days, or are troubled about the hours at which the Bank stages start from Chelsea. We have come to regard Brighton as a place lying at our doors, and Margate as a sea-side village flourishing round the corner. Birmingham, Bristol, Dover, Southampton, and Norwich, all seem to have drawn nearer to town, and to have sunk into the character of London suburbs.

The genii who have brought about these changes in the relations of places are the hard-working road-makers. They have bridged over time and space, have trebled the life of man, when measured by what it can do, and have turned withered villages into thriving cities. They have given us channels as good as money, weights and measures, or any other contrivance for facilitating commerce. They have doubled the size of the poor man's loaf, and of the poor man's fire, and have clothed thousands who, but for them, would have gone naked. Every piece of sound, open, free road is a good Samaritan, that will not let the weary traveller perish by the wayside.

We have all heard a good deal about Roman roads, and some of us have felt the benefit arising from these ancient legacies; but many generations came and went before the great thoroughfare-makers were copied by our countrymen. The art of road-making in England is not much more than a century old, and this gives us many centuries of rough 'bridle-paths' in the dark ages. If any devout believer in the good old times would wish to taste the pleasure of travelling like his forefathers, let him look about for what is called an 'undedicated road' in the neighbourhood of London. He will find plenty in those outskirts where brick-fields and market-gardens are ceasing to make bricks and grow cabbages, and are turning their attention to the cultivation of detached villas.

An undedicated road means a passage still retained by the owner of the land, and not handed over to the parish authorities as a public thoroughfare. It is undedicated to the local board of works, and defies the monthly reports of the district surveyor, but it is dedicated to all kinds of slush and rubbish. It is generally known as the 'back-road' amongst neighbouring schools and families, and is the terror of all right-minded persons who have the care of young children. It is the place where Tommy loses one of his boots in the sucking clay, and hops home for nearly a mile in a fit of nervous excitement. It is the place where Dicky gets a black eye or a cracked head, because he will play at see-saw across an old bar-gate put at the end of the road to mark its private character. It is the place where Sarah Jane breaks the perambulator while pushing it over the uncovered hole of a new coal-cellar; where Master Edward spoils two suits of clothes in three weeks, to the great joy of the local tailor; and where costermongers play undisturbed chuck-farthing on a Sunday morning. The road is a row of soft muddy ridges, formed of brickdust and wet clay, looking like a potato-field; and here and there is a pool of thick fluid the colour of jalap. Some of the children, wishing to make a way into the depths of this wilderness, have planted brickbats in the slush, at easy distances from each other, like the stepping-stones of brooks, and on these they hop in defiance of the mud-billows on either side. Sometimes a foolish traveller, allured by the promise of a short cut, is tempted to try these stepping-stones in the undedicated road, but he generally sticks fast in the centre of the swamp, afraid to go on and hardly knowing how to turn back. Occasionally, during one or two of the dry winter and summer months, the undedicated road may be explored with safety, but for four-fifths of the year it is an impassable bog announced 'to be let on building leases.'

On some such roads as these, in the good old times, the English traveller made his weary pilgrimage. He trusted to nature, and soon became aware that nature only provides the raw material of roadways. The 'merry green-wood,' about which so many fancy romances have been written, must have been often as moist and untidy as a scavenger's yard, while outside the magic limits of the brave old oaks, the pathways must have been moats in the rainy season.

The first Act of Parliament in which a regular provision is made

for the formation and repair of roads in England, is the statute known as the twenty-eighth of Philip and Mary (about 1555). The preamble to this statute describes the roads as 'tedious and noisome to travel on,' and dangerous to passengers and carriages. Under its powers two surveyors of highways were to be chosen annually in every parish, and the inhabitants of all parishes were obliged, according to their respective ability, to provide labourers, carriages, tools, etc., for four days each year, to work upon the roads under the direction of the surveyors. Rude as this system was, it was considered very perfect even up to the reign of Charles the Second, when owing to the increase of carriages, particularly about London, it became necessary to adopt a more effective plan, and the toll system, therefore, made its first appearance. This system, however, was not placed upon anything like a solid footing, any more than the roads were, until about 1767, when it was extended to the great roads in all parts of the country, while the contributions of labour, under the old Act, were confined to the cross or country roads.

London was no better than the country in these days, although 'good and true scavengers' were chosen annually in many of the parishes, and it may date all its improvements under foot to the Westminster Paving Act of 1762. The streets, at this time, were often ditches, obstructed with stalls, sheds, sign-posts, and various other projections. Each inhabitant paved the space in front of his own door, according to his fancy, or his means, and the result generally was to give the passengers a footway of egg-shaped stones, such as we may now find in the outskirts of Birmingham, Leicester, or Nottingham. Those only who have walked a few miles on these half-buried globes in not overthick boots, can realize the agony suffered by our unfortunate forefathers. Kerb-stones were unknown in London a century ago, and the carriage-way was undivided from the footway, except in a few of the principal streets, where chained posts or wooden railings were fixed at the side, as they are still fixed in some of the old suburbs. A constant struggle was made by the passengers to get the wall, as it was called, and so avoid a little of the slush thrown up from the gutter in the centre. The etiquette of the wall was even laid down in books, and fixed in that saying which gives that side to the weakest. 'In the last age,' said Dr Johnson, 'when my mother lived in London, there were two sets of people, those who gave the wall, and those who

took it—the peaceable and the quarrelsome. Now, it is fixed that every man keeps to the right, or, if one is taking the wall, another yields it, and it is never a dispute.' Since that time the rule has been changed, at least for drivers, as we may learn pleasantly from the following epigram :—

> 'The rule of the road is a paradox quite,
> In driving your carriage along ;
> If you go to the left, you are sure to go right,
> If you go to the right you go wrong.'

The plan for extending turnpike-roads from London to distant parts of the country met with the most violent protective opposition. A certain Blandford waggoner, handed down in the pages of anecdote, gave expression to the popular opinion. 'Roads,' he said, 'on'y be good for wun thing—for waggon-drivin'. I on'y wunt vour-foot width in a leane, an' arl the rest may goo to the devil. The gentry ought to steay at whoam, rot 'em, an' not run gossippin' oop and deown the coontry.'

This intelligent native knew exactly what he was talking about, and was not out of tune with his age. The counties in the neighbourhood of London petitioned Parliament against the extension of turnpike-roads, on the ground that the remoter counties would be able, from the comparative cheapness of labour in them, to sell their produce in London at a much lower rate than they could do. They complained that their rents would be reduced, and cultivation ruined by the new system. The new system however, like many other reforms, was carried out in spite of this narrow-minded opposition, and the croakers woke up, in a few years afterwards, to find themselves richer than ever.

The improvement of roads, when once begun, proceeded rapidly enough, because good roads helped, more than anything, to increase our capital and population. It is a mistake to suppose that our forefathers were more benighted than we are, or that we have no men like the Blandford waggoner thriving amongst us. Mankind, we may feel pretty sure, always liked good roads, good lights, good police, and all the adjuncts of our well-advertised civilization ; but they could only get these things by the force of numbers. Roads, lights, and constables have to be paid for by something like a poll-tax, and the fewer the polls, the heavier the burden for each individual.

Even now we could double our police without feeling too secure in our 'castles,' but we are held back from indulging in this luxury by considering the rates. We often grumble that a policeman can never be found when he is wanted, by which we mean that these officers are not as numerous as lamp-posts, but we forget that the remedy is in our own hands, and that we can have any number of constables if we choose to pay for them.

It is almost impossible to take up any book which deals with the last century, without coming upon whole chapters describing the miseries of travelling. People who had any state appearance to keep up were the most unlucky of all, for walking on the side-path was better than riding on the rough flinty roads, and riding on horseback was better than travelling in a carriage. Dukes, lords, ambassadors, and persons of dignity, were in a position like that in which the Irishman found himself when the bottom of his sedan-chair came out, which made him think that he might as well walk, if it were not for the look of the thing. Goods of all kinds in Scotland were conveyed on horseback for speed and cheapness; even oatmeal, coals, turf, straw, and hay, being carried in this way for short distances. A set of people known by the name of cadgers, who have given a word to our slang dictionaries, plied regularly between different places, selling salt, fish, poultry, eggs, and earthenware. These things were carried on pack-horses, in sacks or baskets suspended on each side of the animal. In carrying goods between distant places it was necessary to employ a cart, as all that a horse could carry on his back was not sufficient to pay for a long journey. These carriers, if we include delays, often went at the rate of a quarter of a mile an hour! Mr J. R. McCulloch records it as a fact that the common carrier from Selkirk to Edinburgh, *thirty-eight* miles distant, required a *fortnight* for his journey between the two places, going and returning! The road, it must be said, was originally one of the most dangerous in the whole country, for a large part of it lay in the bottom of a district called Gala-water, from the name of the chief stream, the channel of the water being, when not flooded, the track chosen as the most level, and the easiest to travel in.

Between the largest cities, says the same authority, the means of travelling were very little better. In 1678, an agreement was made to run a coach between Edinburgh and Glasgow, a distance of forty-four miles, which was to be drawn by *six* horses, and to

perform the journey from Glasgow to Edinburgh and back in *six* days. Even a century later it took a day and a half for the stage-coach to travel from Edinburgh to Glasgow.

As late as 1763, there was but one stage-coach from Edinburgh to London, which set out once a month, taking from twelve to fourteen days to perform the journey. In 1830, six or seven coaches set out each day from both ends on the same road, and the time for executing the journey was reduced to about forty-eight hours. Now, it is almost needless to say, that by the Post-office limited mail express train, we may travel the same distance on a comfortable couch in ten hours and a half.

At this time the 'franking' of letters was a valuable privilege conceded to Members of Parliament, and others in authority, and largely used for the accommodation of their friends. The Post-office managers complain very loudly of the strange articles at present sent through the post, but in those days their complaints were much louder. The 'franking,' which began with letters, gradually extended to small parcels, from small parcels it got to cover large ones, and at last the mail-carriers were very much shocked at seeing a huge feather-bed registered as a free letter. Inquiry, indignation, an improved system of mail-carrying, the extension of population and correspondence, and reduced charges for postage, at last put an end to the franking privilege.

While almost everybody could rob the post through this abused 'free-list,' the poor mails were just as ill-treated on the road. The most feeble thief of the day could rob a postboy, and rob him by a most feeble contrivance. The French mail was often stopped on its road to Dover by a piece of string stretched across the entrance of Kent-street, Borough. This caught the horse's legs, caused him to stumble, and throw the postboy off, who returned to the chief office, and coolly reported the loss of his mail-bags. Rural postmen were always ready to be robbed by any stranger who appeared on the road, and it was long before stage coachmen, fed, as they were, with lying stories about the daring of fancy highwaymen, had courage not to stand and deliver at the first impudent summons. The feather-beds, so liberally franked at the expense of the country, were very often carried off into criminal bondage, and few tax-payers can help rejoicing at this punishment of their enemies.

Mr Samuel Smiles, in his recent 'Lives of the Engineers,' has

collected from various sources a number of amusing details about English roads and road-travelling in the last century. In 1690, Lord Chancellor Cowper politely described Sussex as a 'sink of about fourteen miles broad.' People in some parts used to travel by swimming; and it was almost as difficult for old people to get to church in Sussex during winter as it was in the Lincoln Fens, where they rowed there in boats. Fuller once saw an old lady being drawn to church in her own coach by the aid of six oxen. The Sussex roads were so bad as to pass into a by-word. A contemporary says that in travelling through a slough of extraordinary miryness, it used to be called 'the Sussex bit of the road;' and he satirically adds, that the reason why the Sussex girls were so long-limbed was because of the tenacity of the mud in that county; the practice of pulling the foot out of it by the strength of the ankle tending to stretch the muscle and lengthen the bone.

The roads in the neighbourhood of London were as bad as those in Sussex. Chertsey was a two days' journey from town; and Lord Hervey, writing from Kensington in 1736, says:—'The road from this place to London is so infamously bad, that we live here in the same solitude as we would do if cast upon a rock in the middle of the ocean; and all the Londoners tell us that there is between them and us an impassable gulf of mud.' Royal carriages stuck fast in the mud for hours together, defying all efforts to remove them.

It was only a few of the main roads out of London that were in any way practicable for coaches. On the occasion of any state visits, labourers went before the royal train to mend the ways. Judges were thrown into bog-holes while going on circuit, and kept the juries waiting while they were being dug out. Sometimes they fell into sloughs, and had to be hauled out by plough-horses.

It was said, in 1752, that a Londoner would no more think of travelling into the west of England for pleasure, than of going to Nubia. 'Of all the cursed roads,' says Arthur Young in 1769, 'that ever disgraced this kingdom in the very ages of barbarism, none ever equalled that from Billericay to Tilbury. It is for near twelve miles so narrow that a mouse cannot pass by any carriage. I saw a fellow creep under his waggon to assist me to lift, if possible, my chaise over a hedge. To add to all the infamous circumstances which occur to plague a traveller, I must not forget the

eternally meeting with chalk waggons, themselves frequently stuck fast, till a collection of them are in the same situation, and twenty or thirty horses may be tacked to each to draw them out, one by one.' In Essex, generally, he found the roads full of ruts 'of an incredible depth;' he found the turnpike road between Bury and Sudbury, in Suffolk, as bad 'as any unmended lane in Wales;' full of ponds of liquid dirt, and horse-laming flints. Between Titsworth and Oxford he found the turnpike-road, as it was called, abounding in loose stones, as large as a man's head, and full of holes and deep ruts; from Gloucester to Newnham, a distance of twelve miles, he found another 'cursed road,' 'infamously stony, with ruts all the way;' and from Newnham to Chepstow he describes the road as a series of hills, like 'the roofs of houses joined.'

Going to the north, a short time afterwards, this unfortunate but observant traveller found the roads no better in that quarter. Between Richmond and Darlington they were 'like to dislocate his bones;' and when he has to speak of the roads in Lancashire, he foams with rage. He cautions us to avoid them as we would the Evil One, for he measured ruts in them four feet deep, that were full of floating mud.

The roads in the Midland Counties, and in Kent, were no better. When Mr Rennie, the engineer, was engaged in surveying the Weald with a view to the cutting of a canal through it in 1802, he found the country almost destitute of practicable roads.

In Northamptonshire, the only way of getting along some of the main roads in rainy weather was by swimming. Even now it is no uncommon thing, as I can testify by personal observation, to find miles of the railway from Blisworth to Peterborough under water during the wet season. All over the country inland lighthouses—land beacons—were humanely stationed to keep benighted travellers out of quagmires, ponds, and bogs. In Staffordshire, before the great network of canals was made, the roads were so bad, and so much like roads in every other part of the kingdom, that the carriage of earthenware in panniers was one shilling per ton per mile, or eight shillings for a journey of ten miles. This, too, was in the days of the great artist-manufacturer, Wedgwood.

Modes of travelling changed with the gradual improvement of the roads. The foot passengers occasionally took to horse, while ladies rode on pillions, or in horse-litters. Pack-horses gave way to carriers' carts and waggons, and the latter heavy

rumbling vehicles, which did more to wear out good roads than any monsters ever framed by coach-builders, were largely supplanted by stage-coaches about 1650. The waggons crawled along, perhaps, at the rate of ten miles in twelve hours, but the stage-coaches, with much jolting, were able to reach four miles an hour. The waggons were solid, slow, and safe, while the coaches were high and unsafe, and their drivers were drunken bullies. No change in the mode of travelling was carried out without a noisy agitation against it. Class interests were as clamorous then as they are now, and as desirous that their particular business should be regarded as beyond improvement.

The condition of the road to York in the last century is never considered in the popular account of Dick Turpin's half-legendary ride. He is represented mounted on a fiery blood mare, leaping over carts and toll-bars, and flying along a hard, smooth ground granite road, like a jockey at Epsom. This is the fancy picture, and it is almost a pity to disturb it. The York road in most places was like those which made Arthur Young so savage; and bold Turpin's pace *may* have been a broken amble of four miles an hour.

In 1754 the first 'flying coach' was established by a knot of Manchester men to run between that town and London. Their notion of 'flying' was to do the journey in four days and a half, and yet this moderate speed was looked upon with distrust. Lord Campbell tells us that he was warned not to travel by Palmer's improved mail-coaches, the first vehicles that ventured upon eight miles an hour, towards the close of the last century. He was told of certain passengers who had come through by these coaches from Edinburgh to London, and had died of apoplexy from the rapidity of the motion. This eight miles an hour was afterwards increased to ten or twelve, with the improvement in the leading lines of road; and at the latter point the rate of fast travelling stopped, until the best road of all was made—the railroad.

The railway reports, issued from time to time by the Board of Trade, give us a full statistical account of our railroads. The miles opened in 1860 for regular traffic in the United Kingdom were nearly ten thousand five hundred. The travellers during the same year, also in the United Kingdom, were one hundred and sixty-three millions and a half, besides nearly fifty thousand holders of season tickets, who probably made many journeys. Altogether there must have been nearly six journeys in the year for each

member of our population. The trains of all kinds travelled more than one hundred and two millions of miles, or more than four thousand times round the world. Three hundred and fifty-seven thousand and more dogs, and over a quarter of a million of horses, made railway journeys during the same period. The goods traffic represented the carriage of over twelve millions of cattle, sheep, and pigs, and nearly ninety millions of tons of minerals and general merchandise. The receipts of our railways, from all kinds of traffic, were nearly twenty-eight millions sterling (equal to the interest on our national debt), a little less than one-half of which came from passengers and the mails, and the rest, or largest half, from goods. The expenditure of the companies was about forty-seven per cent. of the gross receipts, leaving fourteen millions and a half sterling as the net receipts. The compensation paid for accidents and losses amounted to a little over one hundred and eighty-one thousand pounds. The rolling stock comprised five thousand eight hundred locomotives, over fifteen thousand passenger carriages, and nearly one hundred and eighty-one thousand waggons for goods. Comparing 1860 with 1859, the passengers (or journeys) were increased nearly fourteen millions, the minerals nearly nine millions of tons, the receipts more than two millions sterling, and the miles travelled nearly nine millions. The trains run in the course of the year were upwards of ten thousand a day. The increase every year now is steadily progressive.

The inland roads of Great Britain, however, can never lose their importance as great feeding arteries of towns, even under any possible extension of railways. They have been chiefly made what they are by the greatest engineers, and some of the works of Rennie and Telford of this kind need not hide their heads by the side of the famous Alpine Simplon. Leaving the railway behind us, at any point, we may find much to be proud of amongst our monuments of road-making on the hills and in the valleys of our country. What we have got, however, should not blind us to what we have not got, and while six bridges, practically closed by a toll, are spanning the river Thames between Chelsea and Southwark, we ought not to consider our road-making thoroughly finished.

Before we close these remarks, we must say a few words about London tramways.

The public and parochial discussions about the merits and demerits of tramways have somewhat died away of late, con-

sequent upon a decrease of energy on the part of certain projectors.

Street tramways have undoubtedly had much prejudice to contend against, to say nothing about local interests, public fears, and a little national jealousy. The practical difficulties in the way of working them have been overrated and misstated, and their history has been completely overlooked. They come to us now ostensibly from America, but only in the character of a re-importation. Like steam-navigation, which Fulton borrowed from this country, and extended on the vast lakes and rivers of the United States, street tramways were tried in and about London before they became a 'great fact' in America. Lord Palmerston seemed to be unaware of this, if we are to judge by his speech delivered in Parliament when this subject was recently debated. He alluded to the tramways, or, rather, Roman pavements of Milan, forgetting that he had a fair specimen far nearer home, in the humble neighbourhood of Whitechapel.

One of the earliest modern London tramways, laid down in stone, still exists in the Commercial Road, forming the communication between the East and West India Docks, and the great commercial warehouses in the Eastern parts of London. In consequence of the great wear and tear to which this road was subjected, the trustees decided, in 1827, to lay down a stone tramway, after the manner of the Roman pavements before alluded to, which travelled gentlemen like Lord Palmerston have seen in Florence, Sienna, Milan, and other Italian cities, although they may not have seen it at Whitechapel. The tramway consists of a carriage-way, with two courses of large stone blocks for the wheels to run on, with a space between them for the horses, laid with ordinary gravel.

Besides the great gain which such a roadway offered in point of durability, it promised advantages in increasing the ease of draught to the horses employed upon it, and cheapening proportionally the carriage of goods between the docks and the city. This caused the plan to be very favourably received by the directors of the dock companies, and obtained for it, as far as needful, their cordial co-operation.

The preference which was then given to stone over iron, was chiefly dictated by the consideration that in rainy or frosty weather iron rails are more slippery than stone rails, and more likely to

cause injurious accidents. Iron rails had not been tested by railroads in 1827, as they have been since, so the road was inlaid with stone, and the stone, renewed from time to time, still remains. Among the remains of Pompeii there is a stoneway of this description, the blocks of which are worn half through in ruts, thus showing the antiquity of these contrivances, and the comparative softness of the material used.

The original stone employed in the Commercial Road tramway was all granite, the greater part being obtained from Aberdeen, a considerable portion from Herne Island, some from Mount Sorrel, Leicestershire, and some from Guernsey and Jersey. The stones were all cut in one form and size—not tapering towards the bottom, according to the old absurd practice, but perfectly square, and dressed so as to fit closely to each other. The interposition of any substances between them which might cause a disturbance of position, whether from top or bottom, is thus prevented. To guard against any subsidence from the general level, the stones are laid on a firm bottom of cement and gravel. This was the bottoming found at Pompeii, which, after the lapse of many centuries, was almost perfectly level, while the superincumbent stones were half worn through.

On a common road it is considered good work if a horse can draw one ton at the rate of four miles an hour; but in the Commercial Road, six and seven, and sometimes nine tons, are drawn at this rate by ordinary horses employed in the heavy London traffic. The transport of heavy goods in this road is greater than in any other quarter of the metropolis.

The common objections to tramways in crowded thoroughfares are to a great extent disposed of by the example of London Bridge, the most crowded and way-worn thoroughfare in the world. The eleven thousand vehicles of all weights and shapes which daily pass over this bridge, can only be kept in order by an elaborate tramway system. As rails are not laid down along the road, except stoneways along the gutters on each side, the city police have to take their laborious stand, from morn to dewy eve, and divide the traffic into four streams. This is nothing but a street tramway of the rudest kind; a tramway where no mechanical science is allowed to aid in the work, but where all the labour falls upon human indexes bearing the stamp of official authority, clouded by the mud of London traffic, who stand at intervals in the centre of the road.

This is the late Mr Daniel Whittle Harvey's, the late City Chief Police Commissioner's live tramway, which, one day, when the crowds of vehicles increase so as to be altogether unmanageable, will probably give place to something more in accordance with the railway spirit of the age.

SLOP-SHOP LITERATURE.

THE title at the head of this paper, without much stretching, could be made to include a very broad area of literature. It would take in those very learned, neatly-printed, and profusely-illustrated trade histories, which are only published for the purpose of advertising a particular business. Waxend on the Human Foot, Daniel Lambert on Corns, and Sleeveboard on the Roman Toga, are not authors wishing to make their fellow-creatures more learned, and to secure for themselves the immortality of the British Museum Library, but shoemakers anxious to sell a particular boot, and tailors interested in the sale of paletots and sixteen-shilling trousers. We have most of us seen a treatise upon umbrellas, a history of boots and shoes, another of the cocoa-nut palm, and a discourse upon teeth, which point with unerring constancy to the shops of their masters. We have only just noticed a very costly, gilt-edged history of wool and woollens, written, so the title-page asserts, by Messrs Samuel Brothers. Moses and Son have long kept a poet of no mean ability in their establishment; but the clothiers of Ludgate Hill, so it seems, are more ambitious. The task of writing the history of their trade was one that could not be entrusted to hireling hands, so the inventors of the 'Sydenham trousers' became themselves the Hume and Smollett of their raw material. About eighteen months ago a similar volume was issued under the somewhat inflated title of 'Commercial Enterprise and Social Progress; or, Gleanings in London, Sheffield, Glasgow, and Dublin.' The 'gleanings' appeared to consist chiefly of advertisements of second-

rate firms, and the descriptions were all written with a palpable advertising object.

This, however, is not the kind of slop-shop literature to which I wish to direct attention; as I am not fond of exposing adulterations in every other trade but my own. The slop-shop literature of which I speak is that which is written as literature, published as literature, and bought and read as literature. The people who write it and put it together are called 'authors' and 'literary men,' and the people who sell it are called 'publishers.' The English language is very elastic, and those who use it often stretch it to the utmost.

The first place amongst real slop-shop literature ought to be given to the modern British drama. It claims a position in the world of letters to which it has not been entitled for years. The clever tradesmen who have discovered how much easier it is to take the product of a Frenchman's wit and ingenuity, and turn it into English, than to invent a coherent plot, and fill it up with natural characters, may be complimented for their shrewdness, but for nothing else. Six easy lessons in the French language, and a good French and English dictionary, are all the modern dramatic author requires to start him fairly in business. The managers look upon him with favour, and open their doors to him, because he brings them nothing possessing any dangerous originality. The cost of producing a piece is ten times the 'author's' fee for translating it; and therefore the conductors of London theatres are cautious in selecting their ventures. A drama that has been successful in Paris has been tried and not found wanting, and the theatrical speculator welcomes its appearance in an English dress because he can produce it with less risk than would attend the production of an original piece.

All this is very clever trading on the part of both manager and 'author,' but nothing more. Even when the translator aspires to become an 'adapter,'—a softener down of French manners for the English market, a man who has sufficient talent to turn the Italian Boulevard, Paris, into Regent Street, London, and the Gardens of the Tuileries into St James's Park,—he is still nothing more than a slop-shop author. He may take his wages as a crafty middleman, he may flatter himself, in his secret heart, that Shakespeare borrowed his plots and characters in the same unscrupulous way, but he must be kept down to his proper level in the world of liter-

ature. If he turns virtuous after a long and profitable career, and writes books with not over-clean hands, like the 'Eighth Commandment' by Mr Charles Reade, it shall not absolve him from his original sin. His motto must still be the trading principle that has always governed him:—'Gentlemen's own materials made up.'

A slop-shop drama produces a slop-shop order of criticism, for no journal cares to devote much space or capital to the analysis of mere 'amusements.' What was formerly treated as an art by actors, upheld as an art by managers, and jealously preserved as an art by literary critics, like William Hazlitt, is now chiefly watched over by reporters and 'general writers.' The literature of the stage is 'noticed,' not criticized; and in the leading literary organs the record of its productions is stuffed away in a lumber-corner for paragraphs. No able editor cares a straw about it, but devotes his attention to telegrams and universal politics. An attempt was made, about two years ago, in the daily press, by Mr John Oxenford, to alter the system of scribbling long criticisms upon plays in a hurried hour after the performance, by presenting a weekly digest instead. This would have given time for reflection and careful writing on the part of the critic, but the 'Times' declined to adhere to the suggestion, and it fell to the ground. It was the only symptom of a 'revival' in real dramatic criticism, that we have seen for some years past; but it was not strong enough to overthrow the established slop-shop plan.

If dramatic criticism shows symptoms of degeneracy and even of approaching extinction, the censorship of general literature is in no healthier condition. A hundred books on all subjects,—science, art, and politics, works of imagination and collections of facts, will flow in weekly to an important literary journal; and flow out to three, six, or at the most to a dozen 'reviewers,' as they are called. No one ordinary man can understand thoroughly more than one subject, and yet he is called upon to pass judgment upon twenty. Lord Brougham, great and exceptionable as he undoubtedly is, has an encyclopædical reputation only among encyclopædical men; and when a writer who has devoted himself to one branch of human knowledge tests him upon that branch, an exposure of his lordship's superficial acquirements naturally follows. If Lord Brougham, and wonders of his class, are not infallible at all times upon all subjects, how shall the nameless critic's opinions upon everything be

regarded? Sound common sense, a logical head, and a stock of well-defined principles, may uphold a writer upon 'all things and many others' to a certain extent, but they can never preserve him from exposing his weakness to the initiated when he writes upon subjects he knows little about. If he is not content to manufacture agreeable articles out of books he is incapable of analyzing, he is sure to do an injustice to the authors, and to injure the property of the publishers. He will fall into the dogmatic cant of ignorant criticism, which any literary slop-worker can easily assume; and instead of presenting the readers of his journal with the condensed contents of the volumes before him, he will point out errors that have no existence, and make suggestions that can never be followed. Those uninquiring minds that are entirely governed by the 'opinions of the press,' will at once see how superior the reviewer is to the author, and will duly pity the ignorance of the latter, as directed.

Not one of the so-called 'critical journals' is so managed that each book is invariably sent to the right man and to no other. When an important volume is announced, a volume that will excite much discussion and interest, and become a landmark of that particular publishing 'season,' a critic is sought for whose researches have been carried on in the same workings as the author. It would be dangerous to place such a book in any other hands than those of a special reviewer, and, for once, an article appears whose verdict, favourable or unfavourable, is uttered with a voice of real authority. This is the exception, however, and not the rule; and nine-tenths of the books which appear every year are cut open, tasted, and marked with black or white brands (the whitey-brown or medium brand is almost unknown in such 'noticing') by a small knot of slop-shop reviewers.

Another obtrusive branch of slop-shop literature is the newspaper 'leader.' It has been manufactured for years on a certain mechanical and unvarying plan. It must nearly always be of a certain length, no matter what may be its subject matter; and its writers must generally be men with very dormant, elastic, or negative opinions. A writer who is not cast in this mould is soon disposed of as an impracticable man, a grit that is always getting into the very sensitive machinery of a daily organ. Some honourable exceptions there are, both amongst editors and contributors, to this melancholy rule, men who respect each other, and neither write,

nor cause to be written, that which is not meant; but they are very few. The Swiss—the free lances—with the ready pen and unquestioning mind, are those who provide most of the daily thinking material for those who only think they think. Such writers are shielded from observation, and speak only through the brazen head. Their morality is on a par with that of the outcasts of the street, but no 'midnight meeting' is ever held to reform them.

Apart from the principles which animate most leader-writers, it is curious to examine the construction of their articles. The fixed length or framework which they have to fill up imposes on them a style of composition which is somewhat monotonous. The middle of their articles contains all they really have to say, the introduction and peroration being mostly devoted to ornament. The kernel of a leader can generally be extracted from a few lines near the centre, and nothing will ever be lost by passing over the first two or three paragraphs. The learning which the cheap press often displays is very encouraging to those who wish well to such organs. If you want Greek, Latin, French, Johnsonian words, and scraps of pedantry from all quarters of the globe, you can have it in any quantity for the small charge of a penny. Although most of these leaders, social and political, which the common people try to read and digest, undoubtedly belong to slop-shop literature, to do them justice, they resemble in their effects a grand display of fireworks.

Another most common manifestation of slop-shop literature is 'graphic writing.' Until the trick was discovered, it was considered very wonderful; but now its secret is known, it is practised by all. The commonest account of a fire is now embellished with parodies of those descriptive touches which have made the literary fortune of 'our own correspondent' in different parts of the world. The atmospheric aspects of fire are enlarged upon; the flames are said to lick the adjoining houses; a picture is made of the firemen in the ring; the sparks are played with in what is called 'a happy vein of fancy;' the gray distant spire of some church is picked out, and described under the new colours thrown upon its surface, and, altogether, the old style of 'penny-a-lining' is put to the blush. The representative of the new school throws about his similes with a lavish hand, and rather thinks himself an unappreciated genius. Like a boy who has been sitting for years on the banks of the stream of literature watching the swimmers, he falls in, and is surprised to learn how easy it is to float like his fellows.

The companion of 'graphic writing' in slop-shop literature is 'forcible writing,' and this is now so general that it has descended to Catnach and his compeers. The beauties of English composition are no longer confined to our great literary works; they adorn the meanest catchpenny publication that issues from the press. The occupation of 'Jem Ward,' the well-known 'one-eyed patterer,' and all the distinguished bards of Seven Dials, must assuredly be gone, when sketches like the following are issued by a Whitechapel printer and publisher:—

"THE MYSTERIOUS MURDER OF AN OLD MISER LADY AT STEPNEY.

"All readers of romance are familiar with the ideal of a miser. It is an aged, attenuated, yellow anatomy, who lives like a grub in a cheerless house, and ultimately dies, either crouching on a heap of gold, or leering into a chest full of mortgage deeds, or is murdered by burglars. The late Mr James took hold of the idea, and produced Mr Scarves, who dwelt in solitude with his golden-haired daughter, until fear compelled him to employ a servitor with a knotted stick to watch and guard the dismal but opulent habitation. All the misers upon record have exhibited the same characteristics. Their secretiveness is equal to their penury; they love to see and touch their hoarded wealth; they disdain all pride except that emptiest pride of riches, as if in the whole of Vanity Fair there were a booth more loathsome, more wicked, more hateful than that of the miser. They wear the meanest apparel; they eat the most sordid food; they patch a broken pane of glass with brown paper; they are hard in their bargains, and relentless in the despotism of their extortion; and, generally, as though under some dread retributive law, their ends are ignominious and miserable. 'Thou fool! this night thy life shall be required of thee!' That doom is recorded against the misers one and all. They live in expectation of a day which never comes, and they die unhallowed deaths. The most degraded and desperate of men dog their footsteps; robbery is for ever on their thresholds; they are envied by the very miscreants to whom blood is not sacred, and innumerable have been the instances in which they have perished under an assassin's hand amid the glut of their unfructifying lucre. These remarks apply especially to the fearful event at Stepney. Mrs Emsley, the dust-contractor's widow, was the shabbiest Dives of East London. Her fortune was

splendid. She was proprietor, it is believed, of not less than from eight hundred to a thousand houses, chiefly let to the poor, from whom she exacted her rents with rapacious punctuality. She was old and litigious; she lived solitary, without even a servant. A poor charwoman cleansed her abode every Saturday. Her collecting day Monday, when she sallied forth with a strong-pocketed apron like that of a toll-collector, to receive her due, which, next morning, was deposited in the bank. There it lay, unblessed and worthless, accumulating from one week to another, but of no human value except in the imagination of the insatiable widow. For how did she enjoy her possessions? By leaving her kindred miserably poor; by eating scraps of fly-blown meat haggled for after regular business hours at the butchers' shops; by sustaining her existence upon garbage and water, while she lurked, like a spider in its web, or a wolf in its den, perpetually famished, and waiting for the regular Monday prowl. Then the flies were caught, and the sheep devoured, and the Old Woman of Stepney went back to her haunt, to gloat over heaps of notes and coin, and to indulge in the malignant misery of self-starvation.

"Suddenly her solitude is broken upon. Murder enters her house, and she is struck down amid her mortgage deeds, agreements, securities, and all the dusty addenda of wealth. There she lies, dead, her skull crushed in, her blood staining the floor, her treasure despoiled, and from Monday to Friday, we may presume, her body remains undiscovered. Why should the neighbours wonder? was she not habitually isolated and taciturn? They might have fancied that she was, as usual, gnawing her bone in an attic, in greedy expectation of the next Monday, which was to augment her balance at the bank. No friendly hand touched her knocker. No child or sister cared for her existence. But at length a tenant sent for two brass taps which, with the customary instinct of miserdom, she had delayed providing for the water-butts in one of her own houses. Then was it discovered that her corpse lay stark in an upper room, in the midst of documents relating to her property. In all likelihood some one well acquainted with her character and means had called, had followed her up stairs, had stunned her as she entered her apartment, and had completed his work of murder as she lay senseless in the doorway."

If Mr Dickens can boast of many imitators, Mr Thackeray

numbers almost as many, and the imitations are openly carried into the lowest works of the hour. A novel is now being issued in penny weekly numbers which is thus boldly advertised on its own cover. It is called 'The Woman with the Yellow Hair.'

"This most powerful fiction, from the pen of the First Comic Author and most picturesque essayist of the day, is wonderfully quaint and eccentric in its humour, philosophical in its satire, and deeply affecting in its pathos. The writer so nearly resembles Dickens and Thackeray, in his sketches of London Life, that his anonymous articles in the principal journals of the day have frequently been attributed to those authors.

"The present work, by the fearlessness of its language, and its utter defiance of all those powerful conventionalities which have cramped and fettered modern novelists, making their books but fit for the entertainment of prim Boarding-School Misses, threatens to revolutionize the world of novel writing, and shows that there still remains in our time some of the strength and vigour which of yore characterized the Giants of Literature.

"The object of the author in this story is to unmask Vice and Hypocrisy in every rank of society; to depict life as it really is, and expose in all their ghastly deformity the fearful cankers gnawing at the heart of civilization, which a False Prudery would gloss over and ignore."

The following is a taste of its Thackerayian quality:—

"CHAPTER THE FOURTH.—'THOSE CREATURES!'

"'To the Haymarket!' The Haymarket, where midnight is noonday—where roses are carmine—where there is much drinking but little thirst—where the same faces pass and repass each other every night, and all night long, with the same threadbare badinage, the same senseless joke, the same dreary, weary smirk on the thin cracked lips.

"It has gone twelve—put up your shutters, respectable tradesmen! Get you home, honest people! Stop your ears, Pity! Turn away your head, Mercy! Clench your hand, Charity! We are among the outcasts—'the ulcers and incubuses of society'—the rouged and ragged, flaunting, tawdry—pretty faced and tastefully dressed;—in short, among '*those creatures!*' and we are come

to find your husband, madam, your brother, or your son, whichever it is that you have been sitting up for so patiently these many hours. Be of good cheer, dear lady, he is in right merry company, and in no hurry to get home to you. Be not hard upon him when he comes in; you know he has a sufficiency of your society any day, and he is now amongst such jolly fellows, and such pretty women. Ay! They will be pretty, you know, some of them, with their audaciously bold faces, much prettier than you are. Besides, you know, boys will be boys, and the good world smiles not unkindly upon their innocent gambolling."

This kind of slop-shop literature can be produced in any quantity, and, bad as it is, it appears to sell. Our railway bookstalls are largely supplied with such material, not in the periodical form, but bound up as gaudy books. It is a comfort to know that bookselling at railway stations is almost extinct, for it has done little more than support the slop-shop literature of its own creation. The gamboge covers of such literature have generally been in harmony with the contents of the volumes they brought so unpleasingly before the eye. The days of 'Bubble and Squeak,' by Ernest Maltravers, and 'Mr Collywobbles' Confessions of a Bagman,' by the author of 'Mixed Pickles,' with a host of similar volumes with similar titles, are happily numbered. Such books belong pre-eminently to slop-shop literature, are issued by slop-shop publishers, and were bought by slop-shop readers. Their crackling covers fell to pieces in the hand in the course of a six hours' journey, and no library shelf was ever enriched by the addition of such ragged mockeries. A few old bookstalls upon the line—an egg-chest crammed full of twopenny English classics—an odd volume of the 'Spectator'—of Cibber—of anybody of the last century, would have furnished far more nourishing travelling refreshment to the British public than all such indigestible collections of literary pastry.

NEST-BUILDING APES.

A LITTLE holiday group, standing before M. Du Chaillu's nest-building apes, in the British Museum, bitterly lamented the fact that these animals were not alive. A similar feeling of disappointment was recently experienced at Liverpool, when Mr Walker arrived from the Gaboon, or Baboon River, bringing to land only a few stuffed skins instead of a tribe of living Gorillas. The public mind has been so prepared by wonderful stories about this missing link of humanity, that thousands were ready to welcome it with all the honours accorded to the Japanese Ambassadors. Lord Monboddo was taken down once more from the dusty library shelf; the theory of progression was looked at with kindly tolerance; and the pot-bellied African stranger was met half way with the acknowledgment that he was all but 'a man and a brother.'

This sympathetic yearning towards the nest-building ape is probably caused by one of those mysterious affinities which run through the whole animal world. It would be so easy to show that certain gorillas are nest-building men, or that certain men are nest-building apes, that we can hardly wonder at the interest taken in our newly-discovered cousins. If anything would prove that M. Du Chaillu has not been guilty of giving to hairy nothings 'a local habitation and a name,' it would be the large and easily recognized family of nest-building apes, who have long been taking very active parts in the drama of life. Few of us can lay our paws upon our hearts and say honestly that we are unworthy of this classification. We are constantly gathering the big and little twigs —constantly edging ourselves in from all disasters—constantly making ourselves snug. There is small need to go to a distant howling wilderness for a few dry skins to prove that the nest-building faculty is cultivated by a large and industrious class.

Since the days of Lord Bacon (not to go too far back into the

mists of antiquity) it is probable that nest-building has been cultivated with great success. We find traces of the art in chapels, churches, and palaces, in town halls, picture galleries, and industrial museums. It may be seen in full development at such places as South Kensington; but shops, warehouses, public offices, and a hundred other places are equally governed by it. It reigns almost as absolutely in Tottenham Court Road as it does in Downing Street; in Belgravia and May Fair as in Lombard Street or Chancery Lane. It may be called by various names—such as prudence, industry, success, or property qualification; because language, like figures, is given to us to conceal the truth.

A very good sample of the nest-building ape—shrewd, active, and watchful—may be seen at the Museum of Universal Taste. He is the main prop of that comfortable institution, and is prepared to raise any number of such nests at the shortest notice, and on the most unreasonable terms. The nest of this knowing ape was first built of the humblest twigs—a structure hideous, but cheap, and therefore not calculated to alarm the British tax-payer. Thick and squat as it appeared, it was the thin edge of the wedge. By slow and silent degrees the nest spread into something between a show and a school, and while it professed to improve the lower orders of the east, its home was at the extreme west of London. Minor nests were built for a number of minor apes; grants of money were got from ear-wigged parliamentary committees; and at last the thick end of the wedge—the full-blown nest—was allowed to emerge from behind the official curtain.

Another thriving specimen of the nest-building ape may be seen any day in the person of the Rev. Mr Tabernacle. He has covered himself in with a very eligible and valuable freehold by shouting out the Gospel according to St Lucre. Nothing less than an absolute command of a well-built nest would satisfy the acquisitiveness of this calculating apostle. The hat went round very pushingly for twigs in the name of the Christian faith, and the backward in giving were reminded with sternness that the labourer was worthy of his hire. The nest, like many other similar nests, will always command a good market price, as the title to it is made clear by a good store of worldly precaution.

The official and clerical nest-building apes have worthy companions in the persons of their commercial brethren. The trading ape, wedged up in snug quarters by his cash-books, and ledgers, is

generally distinguished for his power of nest-building. He has surrounded himself with banks, insurance offices, and a thousand varieties of nests, each one furnishing homes for other apes, more or less enterprising. In the language of commerce, a nest is often called a 'basis of operations,' a pretty and expressive name, and one that is not at all offensive. The trading ape generally manages to build his nest, whether he is honest and successful, or dishonest and unsuccessful. In the first case he buys a few small palaces, and takes rank as a merchant prince; in the second he arrives at a smaller degree of comfort and elegance, through a marriage settlement. The nest in the last instance is built with creditors' twigs and put out of the reach of hungry assignees by a legal family conveyance.

The legal profession, who so often build or destroy other people's nests, furnish a very good number of these particular apes. Starring barristers who neglect every case that does not lead to notoriety; who address juries from half-built nests only to collect more twigs, or to be lifted bodily into a warm woolsacky retreat, are certainly no unworthy members of this species. The web-spinning lawyer, who partly feeds the barrister—who looks out from a bower of bills of costs—is about as fine a specimen of the 'nest-building ape' as any fancier of the tribe would like to examine. They all have one little fault—selfishness—a little too strongly developed; they all believe devoutly in the same worldly-wise maxim—each one for himself and God for us all. And yet are they not all 'men and brethren?'

ADVERTISING LITERATURE.

THERE is a class of literature struggling hard to secure a place in the world of letters, the fate of which has hitherto been to die almost as soon as born. It has taken the form of poetry, and the form of prose. It has affected humour, and history, and narrative; and it has called in the pencil of the illustrator to its aid; but in spite of this it has found no resting-place, either upon drawing-room tables or on

library shelves. It has always worn two faces under one hat, and with such shallow hypocrisy, that the dullest reader refused to be deceived. Its Shaksperes and its Miltons have tuned their harps to sing the praise of cheap clothing or of quack medicines, and have perished miserably in the attempt.

This class of literature, we need hardly say, is Advertising Literature. It has always fretted under the weakness which caused it to die so young, and without being beloved by the gods. It has contaminated its fingers with trade bribes, and yet has not had nerve enough to face the inevitable punishment. It has been carried to the waste-paper buyers, as unwillingly as a child is taken to the dentist's; and it has endeavoured to arrest the destructive hand of the rude boors who were blind to its literary merits, by the external charms of a costly and elaborate binding.

There was a time, not a quarter of a century back, when grammar and spelling were considered very unimportant in tradesmen's handbooks or handbills, and purity or elegance of type was a thing undreamed of. Now we may see every variety of ornamental printing, if we only examine the cards that are thrust into our hands or into our letter-boxes. We are told where to buy our soap and candles in the old red and black Anglo-Catholic type; while fancy ironmongers have rushed wildly into Gothic and cursive print; and railway bills have gone back to the numerals of the fifteenth century. Blank spaces are engaged and paid for in the advertising columns of accommodating journals; Greek names are given to waterproof goloshes and six-shilling shirts; and these names are printed upside down between the blank spaces, in order to attain more force in striking the eye of the reader. The day when Black-Letter type will be applied to advertisements of hats or umbrellas is evidently not far distant.

Perhaps the rudest form of advertising literature is that which endeavours to fasten the puffing of a particular hat, or a particular pair of boots, upon some great contemporaneous political event. This form was popular in London during the early days of cheap clothing; but it has now given way, in obedience to a more advanced and artistic taste. The provinces still cling to it, as being the best and latest style they know, like our metropolitan dressmakers, who are content to copy the garments which Paris has worn the year before.

In Scotland, we find an energetic address to the people, con-

taining, amongst heaps of similar matter, the following rousing phrases, set forth with all the art of large and varied type:—'The Disastrous War between France and Austria! Fifty thousand human beings destroyed to no purpose! Thousands upon thousands of disfigured, bloated corpses choking the magnificent serpentine rivers, and fattening the fertile plains of Lombardy. Despots, tyrants, are you men or beasts? Humbug peace; it cannot last, pity if it should! Treachery to the cause of Italian independence! the professed objects of the war overlooked.' This is all very stirring political writing—sufficiently stirring to stand no chance of admission into France; but why is it illustrated with the picture of an ordinary beaver hat? Further on you may read half a long column about the late Italian War, the French alliance, and 'Italy, garden of the earth! lovely, romantic Italy! left by a deceptive peace in a worse, because more precarious, position than when the war commenced;' but still the shadow of that hateful, commonplace, every-day black hat hangs over all this English composition and dims its fire. When you get to the end of the article, you find that you have been listening to the not-altogether disinterested outpourings of an advertising hatter, who informs you that his stock is very large at present, that he has splendid satin hats, light and durable, from six shillings and sixpence, and a delicious production at eighteen shillings. What would not such an enterprising tradesman with literary tastes have given if Burns had sung in this strain?—

> Scots wha ha' wi' Wallace bled—
> Scots wham Bruce has often led—
> If you want a graceful head
> Go to Ross, the hatter.

This is the simplest and least artistic form of advertising literature. The main object—to state the name, the address, the leading article, and the average price—is concealed, it is true, until the reader arrives at the end of the essay or poem, but then it comes upon him with the shock of a most fearful anti-climax. He is not let into the gaping mart of the enterprising trader, in a gentle, persuasive way; he is addressed by earnest politicians, or sung to by beguiling poets, who suddenly throw off their masks, and stand confessed as noisy touters demanding his custom or his life. His nerves are jarred; his taste is offended; and a feeling of antagonism grows up

within him. He will not only not buy, but what is worse, he will neither read nor listen with anything like attention in future. His faith has been severely shaken; and the clumsiness of the puffing trader has created a cynical sceptic.

Sometimes this literature indulges in certain eccentricities, by attempting to address the inhabitants of a foreign country in their own tongue, without proper guidance, or by soaring into the lofty regions of tragic poetry. As a fair sample of the latter kind, we may take a tragedy in four acts, called 'Alexander the Great,' which is 'dedicated to the stage' by the author, Mr Paulin H. Pearce, who describes himself as a 'sea-actor.' In all publications like this, there is a large share of literary pretension, and while the instinct of the tradesman (or professor) leads him to advertise his everyday trading occupation, he yet preserves the sensitiveness of the author. We would not willingly say a word to wound the feelings of the highly expert swimmer who has written this tragedy of 'Alexander the Great,' but as it comes into the category of 'advertising literature,' we merely describe it as it stands, as tenderly as though we loved it.

The author very judiciously begins with swimming, and his preface runs thus:—'A few rules I submit with confidence to your notice on SWIMMING, for I have taught above five thousand persons the art, and performed the parts of Julius Cæsar, Hercules, and Alexander the Great in the open sea; and swam to the Brake Buoy and back, at Ramsgate, before thousands of spectators, likewise from Dover to Calais, Margate, Broadstairs, and other places; cooked and ate dinners, caught fish, fired blunderbusses, bows and arrows, flew several kites at one time, sailed on the water, dressed and undressed,' etc., etc. Mr Pearce then tells us how to swim well—how to float on our backs—how to swim on our backs—how to turn back when we are swimming—how to turn from our stomachs on to our backs, and the reverse—how to stand in the water—and how to dive. Then comes the tragedy, written in blank verse, with occasional burst of rhyme, from which we give a short quotation:—

ACT 1, SCENE 2ND.—THE SUN AND MEADOWS.

Enter Diogenes with his tub rolling.

DIOGENES. The massy sun sheds golden beams of day,
Illumes the waving sea and gushing spray,
The eastern sky unfolds harmonious sounds
Through all the spheres vibrate to ocean's bounds,

Creation, order touch the golden strings
And planets roll upon their aerial wings,
Soft yellow clouds with waving lustre shine,
Shaded with solar halos bright divine.
Hail ! glorious sun, clear shining light of day,
Thy vital beams revive the dormant clay,
And vivify the air with beaming light,
All nature glories in thy massy might ;
I pay thee homage for thy glowing heat,
Few are my wants, fresh herbs my daily meat :
What are ambitious conquerors to me,
Whom all the gaping crowds now run to see ?
There's Alexander, swelling in his pride,
To make the world an ass, that he may stride
The stubborn brute, for this his father sighed ;
Some future time he'll ride the hornéd moon.
Ha ! ha ! he thinks new cares are quite a boon,
And I will bask within the bright sunshine,
Nor let this hero turn this brain of mine. (*Basks.*)

When Mr Pearce has waded through his tragedy in some such style as this, he gives us his address, where he is always to be found, and then concludes by telling us how to swim on our sides ; how to swim feet first ; and how to swim like lions and serpents. How to swim and recite his tragedy at the same time to crowds of listening and admiring spectators, he does not inform us.

As a sample of the foreign advertiser endeavouring to address himself to a strange people, we may take the treatise of a Dutch quack doctor, printed in what he fondly supposes to be English by John Enschede, of the City of Haarlem, in Holland. We have all heard of the enterprise and advertising daring of our leading English dealers in quack medicines ; and we have all been told that there is no language in the world which does not set forth their specific remedies. Perhaps our Dutch quack doctor may not be the only bold advertiser whose language may have been laughed at by the alien and the stranger.

'This medicine (he says) works miraclas with every one, that makes use of it, and the Grace of the Omnipotedt God is experiencedt in it to admiration. . . . . .When you take this Remedy, it unites it fell to the stomaeh, and is the fame as a flying mercury, not letting the vapours rife without being mixed with them. It likewife prevente at moist hum hurs from running through the veins or nerves. . . . . .If you take fifteen drops of this

Remedy after supper, going to bed, it wil expel all gravel or stone without the loast inconvenience; and what we admire most, is hat it dissolves suhtoe time it cals, same inwardly hy the etat. . . . . A fick man Abraham van Nut having been under cure of the most eminent phyficians for opwards of three years, was at laft car ried to Amsterdam to undergo an operation appogref wo weak that the could not bearone. Abut freely making of our Remedy haw entriruft lyrostored to his perfect health. . . . . It cures all Anxie ty Megrims, Giddines, and Headakes, big smetling it, or by putting it in the eras of the fick person a little bal of cot ton loaked in the same Medicamentum. . . . . You may anoint Ulcers, Malingant sores, all cankres be assured of its perfecticure. . . . . The greatestt Pain of Colick that cambe, immediately ceases with ihitty Drops ot he fame Remedy. . . . . .This is the content of our Medicamentum Gratia Probatum, or the Remedey approved by Grate; but I find no remedey for those thae follow bed Counеil, or advice; nor for those thae do not libe medicine; munch lefs for those that seems too delicate in taking it. . . . . .This Medicamentum is made and sold in tho City of Haarlem, in thi Provincie of Holland, at the house of Nicolas de Koning Tilly' who is the author of the fame, since the year 764, and so was his Grandfather Claas Tilly before him, that was the Chief Inventor of it, since the year 1898.'

The favourite form which advertising literature has long taken and kept, is that of the Almanac. A certain distinguished example, which was started, we believe, for the purpose of making known a few patent medicines, has now attained a circulation, although professedly published at a shilling, reputed to reach nearly half-a-million every year. The chief object for which such publications are issued is apparent on nearly every page; and you are advised in what months you ought to give your children a particular dose of a certain physic or your cattle a particular allowance of a certain food.

The highest order of advertising literature, and the one in which may be seen the earliest attempts to secure a permanent position on the library-table or the library-shelf, is the trade history. We have one of the Umbrella, another of Boots and Shoes, another of the Cocoa-Nut palm, and another of Wool and Woollens. To this we may add a republished series of letters upon the use of Fire-arms.

The first of these is issued by a well-known umbrella manufacturer, but it contains nothing that might not have been collected and put together by any one unacquainted with that particular trade. It is meant to be readable; it strives to be amusing; and it is illustrated by a distinguished comic artist. We have fancy pictures of Jonas Hanway, and Egyptian frescoes, a few patches of Greek and Latin quotation, a few doubtful stories, and a postscript which means business, at the end.

In the second of these trade histories—the one of boots and shoes—we have even more learning in the Egyptian fresco style: a good deal about Greek, Roman, and Saxon shoes; an illustrated account of foot costume in England; and a discourse upon the anatomy and treatment of the foot. All this is made to revolve very skilfully round a certain patent leather, which the author has invented, and manufactures into shoes for tender feet. The account of the cocoa-nut palm is framed in the same way, and for a similar trading purpose; and the letters upon care with fire-arms, while they contain much useful information, are intended as an index pointing to a certain shop at the West End. Although they are addressed 'to all true lovers of the trigger and friends of humanity,' it is difficult to believe that their spirit is purely disinterested. A clumsy sportsman, who shoots *himself* on his own doorstep, is a gun customer destroyed, and the literature which attempts to preserve him may be the same as that of the Scotch hatter, in which the 'Fifty thousand human beings destroyed to no purpose' are loudly lamented, because, being dead, they can no longer want hats.

We next meet with a specimen of what we may call the Gay Archæological Advertisement:—

'While strolling down Addle Street, yesterday, ruminating on the mutability of mundane matter, and wondering where Athelstan's palace stood of yore, I chanced to turn down Philip Lane, and "a change came o'er the spirit of my dream," for I saw a very old friend putting on a new face, in that the ancient hostelry of "Ye King's Arms," better known, perhaps, as the "Old Yorkshire," was being re-juvenized. What a pity, thought I, that poor humanity cannot undergo the process! and in fancy I again peopled the arena with those political gladiators, who, in my hot youth, were wont to engage in deadly (political) combat here. Again I beheld the sarcastic Smith, ubiquitous Wilson, the jester Peat, and Harrison the robust, and those other master spirits, whose speeches

were "wont to set the table in a roar," no, I don't mean that, but the coruscations of whose brilliant fancy have shed undying radiance upon its hospitable roof. A falling brick quickly dispelled the illusion, and I exclaimed, in the prophetic language of that great orator of our time (I need hardly say that I allude to Unsworth), "Where are we now?" and Echo, who answers for everything and everybody, replied, "Where?" An intelligent specimen of muscular Christianity informed me that the present spirited proprietor, whose high moral character and courteous demeanour has endeared him to all with whom he has come in contact, has, with that spirit of enterprise which is the great characteristic of the present day, determined to renovate and restore the entire establishment to its pristine glory, so that not only that ever-increasing circle of town friends should have their comfort increased, while their legs were stretched beneath his mahogany, but that he would be able to open wide his portals and his arms for his country friends; and as he offers us extraordinary dinners at less than ordinary prices, let us hope that he will reap no niggard harvest for his investment; and as we have the authority of the Bard of Avon for stating that there is a tide in the affairs of each of us, which, if taken at the flood, leads on to fortune, we trust that his flood is near at hand, and we believe he knows how to take advantage of it, so that with the hatchet of war buried in the back garden, and the calumet of peace, filled with the choicest bird's-eye, in his mouth, and surrounded by his friends, we trust that there are very many years of unalloyed happiness in store for him.'

The triumph, however, in this kind of literature was reserved for an advertising firm of cheap tailors to enjoy. 'The Wool and Woollen Manufactures of Great Britain,' written, we presume, by Samuel Brothers, as their name appears upon the title-page, and published by Piper, Stephenson, and Co., is a trade history, as far removed from those before mentioned, as a 'Lay of Ancient Rome' is removed from a Catnach ballad. A large octavo book, of nearly two hundred pages, with broad margins, printed in the highest style, upon the finest gilt-edged, glazed paper, and published at 10*s.* 6*d.*, in an ornamental cover, is an example of advertising literature of which the age may be proud. That it is armed to fight for that coveted place on the drawing-room table, or the library-shelf, is evident from the style in which it is published; and that it is never meant to attain a large and fleeting circulation, is also as evident

from its price. People who give half-a-guinea for a book, or who are presented with a volume whose price is half-a-guinea, will take good care to secure it from the waste-basket, even if they are not interested in, or capable of judging of, its contents. This is the truth which Messrs Samuel Brothers have discovered, and by acting upon it, in a bold and enterprising spirit, they will secure a certain amount of breeches-pocket respect for their volume (the first of a promised historical and descriptive series), and be handed down in indissoluble connection with 'Wool and Woollens' long after the ephemeral cheap or gratis trade histories which surround them are forgotten.

RELIGIOUS BOOK TITLES.

I KNOW I am about to tread on delicate ground, and that I shall find myself in the position of a performer who is dancing a hornpipe amongst a number of eggs. I cannot help it. If I am sent to perdition by saints and preachers, I must still have my say. I have often been lectured upon sins and vices that I never possessed, and I now feel that I have a call to lecture the lecturers.

Without any malice, any prejudice, any particular tincture of any particular infidelity, I do not honestly think that the conductors of cheap, would-be-popular literature are going exactly in the right way. They mean well, no doubt—as well as many notorious sinners have meant—but I need scarcely allude to the proverb which represents 'another place' as being paved with such intentions. My accusation against the conductors of cheap, would-be-popular religious literature, and also against certain authors of religious books, is short and simple. I think that in endeavouring to run on level terms with the light and 'comic' publications of the age, they have become flippant—almost dangerously flippant—without being more amusing. They have acknowledged the character of their pills by laying on a meretricious and shallow gilding—

they have danced to the pipings of scoffers and unbelievers, they have eaten out of the same flesh-pots, they have dwelt in the same Ichabod palaces, they have wallowed in the same mire of false and mistaken wit, and only to succeed in alarming or disgusting their friends, without attracting any converts from the ranks of their enemies.

There is a certain epic dignity about all religious subjects and biblical records which it is not wise to disturb. The line is so thin and so easily broken, which divides the ridiculous from the sublime, that it will not bear the touch of the lightest trespasser, much less the clumsy kicking of undiscerning men. A single letter will derange the ideas of nineteen centuries. The name of Solomon has the calm, cold, statuesque dignity of an Egyptian sphynx; the name of Solomons is suggestive of fried fish, auction-mart 'riggers,' second-hand garments, and the slums of Aldgate. The 'Israel in Egypt' is a great work of a great master, in which the Red Sea gapes and roars even within the walls of a conventional concert-room; but call it Israels in Egypt, before a note is sounded, and it will suggest no picture but the Pyramids half covered with placards of an advertising tailor. The conductors of would-be-popular moral and religious literature—honest and persevering as they may be—have not been sufficiently careful, or sufficiently endowed with a pure sense of the ludicrous, to avoid this rock, and for this reason they have lost ground, to my thinking, instead of gaining it. A large circulation of tracts, hand-bills, periodicals, and books is good as a trading speculation, or as an engine for spreading certain ideas; but not good if the ideas it spreads are the very opposite to those which the writers and publishers are supposed to be teaching. I look upon the titles of all such publications as of the utmost importance. It is the only thing placed before the public in preliminary advertisements; it forms a phase which is always in the mouth of buyer and seller, and which is often the only vestige of a work which lingers in the mind of an average reader. No amount of bad writing can wholly destroy the effect of a good title; and no amount of good writing can atone for, or destroy the influence of, a bad one. This holds good, I imagine, to a great degree in books; to a greater degree in periodicals and the titles of articles; to a far greater degree in slender tracts; and to the greatest degree of all in literary handbills. In proportion as the matter becomes meagre in quantity, so does the influence—the grappling force—of the title

increase, until in some cases—no mean majority, perhaps—it is the undisturbed master of the situation.

If there is any truth in this reasoning, what must we say to a variety of moral and religious titles of books, pamphlets, and handbills which are being disseminated at the present moment under the most distinguished and spotless authority, and if not, what must we say to them with equal justice upon purely artistic grounds?

I will first take the 'Illustrated Handbills (compiled by the Editor of the "British Workman"),' which, according to the advertisement, 'embrace Religion, Sabbath Observance, the Sacred Scriptures, Temperance, Peace, Kindness to Animals, Truthfulness, Swearing, War, Smoking, etc.' So far, so good,—in fact, very good; but how about some of the titles? 'Oh, this Hard Lump,' 'The Cabman's Dying Cry,' 'How to manage an Ass,' 'My Father's at the Helm,' and 'The Bullet in the Bible,' are five titles selected out of fifty, and what must any unprejudiced reader think of their taste, judgment, and adaptability to the lower orders? What class of people can they be, who, according to supposition, are only to be reached by such false and dangerous familiarity? Is the awful chariot of Jehovah likely to be more respected after being dragged through the mud like a cats'-meat barrow at the heels of a powerful but mistaken Association? Is the Gospel likely to be more largely drunk and relished when brought down to the level of 3*d.* a pot in our own mugs? The first of these titles ('Oh! this Hard Lump') can only suggest indigestion; 'The Cabman's Dying Cry' tempts one to ask if it was 'four shillings a mile.' 'How to manage an Ass' sounds exceedingly disrespectful to converts. 'The Bullet in the Bible' might be the name of a conjuring trick, performed by some distinguished wizard, while 'My Father's at the Helm' is a very fair specimen of that playfully familiar style of dealing with the most sacred subjects, which only religious Societies and licensed preachers can adopt without fear of reproof, of warning, or of excommunication.

Passing from these 'Illustrated Handbills'—whose objectionable titles can easily be altered—to another stratum of moral and religious publications, I find a variety of books, tracts, and articles, all, apparently, christened at the same font. As my object is not to attack individual writers or individual publishers, I avoid as much as possible the mentioning of names, but I am obliged to quote the *bonâ fide* titles of existing or announced works in order to

strengthen my argument. As two other examples of that familiarity with sacred subjects, which is calculated, according to my views, to breed contempt, I will take such a title as 'Christ knocking at the Door of the Soul.' Will any one say that the taste which framed this title would shrink from adapting the negro song of 'Who's that knocking at the Door?' to the work of sectarian proselytism? What appreciable difference is there between such a religious title as 'The Night, the Dawn, and the Day,' and those theatrical tableaux which are usually supposed to form an attraction in the playbill of a Victoria melodrama?

If I were to take two other strictly religious titles, viz., 'Pearls from the Ocean,' and 'Echoes of Eternity,' what man who reads this letter would be able to give me the lie if I said that the first was a well-known popular quadrille, and the second a highly-effective waltz by Jullien? If I went still further, and after taking two other titles of similar works, 'The Early and the Latter Rain,' and 'Good Seed for the Lord's Field,' thought proper to add 'by Mr Thorley, author of the "Food for Cattle,"' what sign would there be on the surface, or in the last title, to show that I had practised a deception? Another such title, called 'Bread from Heaven,' might be improved in the same direction by adding 'Down again to Ninepence' (or whatever is the price of Bibles); while 'A Book you will like' might be provided with a couple of worthy companions, having the same shopkeeping twang, in the shape of 'Is there any other article?' and 'Can we send it home for you?'

I pass over such books as 'The Lamplighter,' which has come and gone, and such an alarming title as 'The Great Tribulation coming on the Earth,' which latter, I suppose, could only allude to the fact that a new book was in the press, author Dr Cumming. Though I pass over these things without comment, I cannot abstain from noticing a book that was recently announced, called 'Nuggets from the Oldest Diggings; or, Researches in the Mosaic Creation.' This title is, doubtless, considered likely to popularize that most unpopular of all compounds, a mixture of theology and geology. As no particular 'mission' is claimed for it, except the one great mission to be sold, I will leave it as it stands, merely hoping that the world may not be destined to lose, in the warfare of religious discussion, so evident and promising a 'comic writer' as the author of such a title.

In these days of Spurgeonesque preaching we ought not to be

surprised at anything, and it is wrong, perhaps, to expect our popular, or would-be-popular, religious literature to do more than reflect the religious manners and whims of the time. The same theological literary taste is now at work which produced Richard Baxter's 'Heavy Shove,' 'A Salve for Sore Eyes,' 'Pins and Needles for the Ungodly,' and a hundred other similar titles; and the true interests of religion, to say nothing of public decency, are likely to benefit as much by the one as they, doubtless, did by the other. This rage for 'taking' title-making in religious works may not end with its present efforts; and as a man of the world, of the earth, earthy, I venture to make a few suggestions for further progress. I think the following titles would circulate widely, and do a deal of good, if they did not, like their predecessors, cause a leak in one part of the spiritual ship while they were pumping out the black water in another. These are:—'Box and Cox Converted and Baptized,' 'How the Wandering Minstrel (Jem Baggs) was gathered into the Fold,' 'Did you ever send your Wife to Camberwell New Chapel,' 'Harlequin, Day of Judgment; or, I'm a-looking at you,' 'The Reformed Skittle-sharp,' and 'The Repentant Pot-boy.' When once you begin to dabble in flippant and comic titles, it is worse than useless to stand still. The seasoning must be made stronger with every succeeding dose, or the palate will begin at once to loathe its mixture.

I cannot be accused of any attempt to undermine religion in offering these additional titles, as I should be much more gratified by their utter rejection, and the total destruction of all those which have gone before them. I think it is far better that the pure stream of religion should be left in dimness and mystery, high up in the distant everlasting hills, than that it should be turned on with vulgar familiarity in every man's house, like New River water, or Imperial gas, or should be hawked about the streets as our fine, old, original, gospel fluid, only a penny a glass, with the usual trading reduction upon taking a quantity.

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